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## *Sayyed Ahmad Kasravi historian, language reformer and thinker*

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ABSTRACTSayyed Ahmad KasraviHistorian, Language Reformer and Thinker.

Sayyed Ahmad Kasravi was one of the greatest scholars and thinkers of 20th-century Iran. He had already won an international reputation as a historian and as a linguist before he was murdered by a religious fanatic in 1945. His ideas about language reform, literature, religion and politics challenged traditional Iranian ways of thinking. The purpose of this thesis is to outline the contents of Kasravi's writings, to quote comments by his admirers and critics, and to express our own views when possible.

In Chapter I, Kasravi's background, education and career are outlined, and influences which helped to shape his thought are indicated.

Chapter II contains summaries of the contents of Kasravi's historical works, and quotes Iranian and foreign appraisals of his achievements as a historian.

Chapter III contains summaries of Kasravi's principal writings in the field of linguistics and language reform, together with assessments of his work.

Chapter IV contains summaries of Kasravi's writings as a literary theorist, and discusses his hostility to mystic and panegyric poetry.

Chapter V contains summaries of Kasravi's views on existing religions and of his own religious beliefs. Comments by his critics and some comments of our own are appended.

Chapter VI contains summaries of Kasravi's views on mysticism, materialism and other ideological matters.

Chapter VII contains summaries of Kasravi's views on political, economic and social problems, with comments.

In the Conclusion an attempt is made to assess the importance and influence of Kasravi's life and work as a whole. Various Iranian and foreign views of Kasravi's achievements are also quoted.

In the three Appendices, further information is given on Kasravi's life and personality and the sources of his ideas; and some comparisons are made between Kasravi's ideas on religion, politics, and language, and other contemporary ideas.

Sayyid Ahmad Kasravi

Historian, Language Reformer and Thinker

by

Minoo Ramyar

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts in the  
University of Durham for the degree of ~~MASTER~~  
of ~~Literature~~.

May 1969.

School of Oriental Studies,  
Elvet Hill,  
Durham.

## Table of Contents.

<u>Transliteration</u>	...	...	<u>Page</u>
			IV
<u>Preface</u>	...	...	1
<u>Chapter One</u>	...	...	4

### Kasravi's biography.

Kasravi's private life. His family, birth place, and childhood. Kasravi's education and teachers. Kasravi's journeys and occupations. Kasravi's journeys to Tehran, Mázandarán, Zanján, Khuzestán and Damávand. College teaching. Kasravi's social and political activities. Kasravi's membership of the Democrat party. Kasravi's charitable activities. Kasravi's disagreement with Khiábáni. The Ázádegán party. Parcham newspaper and Paymán magazine. Kasravi's religious and sociological ideas. Kasravi's relationship with the mollás. Kasravi's scholarly achievements. The first attack. Kasravi's last days and his death.

<u>Chapter Two</u>	...	...	32
--------------------	-----	-----	----

### Kasravi as a Historian.

Shahriárán-e Gommám, main contents. Kasravi's difficulties and aims. Plutarch's Lives. Shaykh Safi va Tahár-ash. Tárikh-e Mosha'sha'íán yá Pánsad-sáleh-ye Khuzestán. Paydáyesh-e America. Karnámak-e Ardashir-e

Bábakán. Tárikh-e Mashruteh-ye Irán. Tárikh-e Hejdah-sáleh-ye Ázarbáiján. The last phase of the Constitutional revolution. Some comments on Kasravi's History of the Iranian Constitutional struggle.

Kasravi's articles on historical subjects.

1. The Afshárs of Khuzestán.
2. History of Tabarestán and Our Researches.
3. Cities and Rulers (Shahr-há va Shahriárán).
4. The Afshár Tribe (Il Afshár)
5. Shams al-Din Toghrá'i.
6. Taymur Malek.
7. The Báyondoris.
8. History and the Historian.

Kasravi's style of history writing.

Chapter Three ... 107

Kasravi's linguistic studies and theories.

Kasravi's studies of the Persian language.

Chapter Four ... 234

Kasravi's literary studies. Comments.

Chapter Five ... 234

Kasravi's studies of religion.

Section I. Kasravi's analyses of different religious beliefs.

Section II. Kasravi's own religious beliefs.

God and creation spirit. The other world. Reason.  
 Religion and science. ~~IRRELIGION~~. Life. Prophet  
 hood. The meaning of Pak-dini. Man's duties.  
 International coexistence. Capital punishment.  
 Land ownership. Importance of Agriculture. Social  
 and governmental organization.

Section III. Some comments on Kasravi's  
 religious ideas.

Chapter Six ... 307

Kasravi's views on mysticism, philosophy and  
 materialism.

Chapter Seven ... 328

Kasravi's political and sociological ideas.  
 Comment.

Conclusion ... 374

Bibliography ...

*Appendix A. Further information on Kasravi's life and  
 personality and the sources of his ideas.*

*Appendix B. Some comparisons of Kasravi's religious and  
 political ideas with other contemporary ideas.*

*Appendix C. Some comparisons of Kasravi's ideas about  
 language with other contemporary ideas.*

## TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration in this thesis is phonetic, except that a few common words, such as Islam, Iran, Tehran, Iraq, are written in the usual English spellings. We have tried to reproduce the Persian words as they are pronounced in Iran today and in such a way that their Persian spellings can be identified; but because of the difficulty of typing diacritical points, we have not distinguished between the different Arabo-Persian letters which are pronounced exactly alike (te and tā; he-ye hotti and he-ye havvaz; se, sin and sād; zāl, ze, zād and zā), except in the case of ghayn and qāf, which we have rendered as gh and q, even though both are pronounced gh. We have marked initial 'ayn (e.g. in 'Ali) even though it is not normally pronounced, and we have shown a moshaddad consonant by double letters (e.g. in bachcheh or tasavvof) even though it is normally pronounced like an ordinary single consonant. We have represented the unpronounced vāv after khe by w (e.g. in khwish). We have written h for both the pronounced and the unpronounced he-ye havvaz at the end of words; e.g. Ruzbeh-e Paymān and Ruznāme-h-ye Paymān (pronounced Ruznāme-ye Paymān).

VOWELS

a	اَ
o	وْ
e	يَ
ā	آ
u	أُ
i	إِ
ow	اَوْ
ay	أَيِ
āi	آيِ

CONSONANTS

,	أَ
b	ب
p	پ
t	ت
s	ث
j	ج
ch	چ
h	ح
kh	خ
d	د
z	ذ
z	ز
z	ز
zh	ژ

s	س	
sh	ش	
s	ص	
z	ض	
t	ط	
z	ظ	
'	ع	
gh	غ	
f	ف	
q	ق	
k	ک	
g	گ	
l	ل	
m	م	
n	ن	
v	و	(consonant)
h	ه	
y	ی	(consonant)

- 
1. Hamzeh in Arabic words: ' . Hamzeh in Persian words: ye or i  
(e.g. so'āl, Qor'ān) (e.g. bachcheh-ye u; bachche'i)

Hamzeh-ye yas1 in Arabic words: ' . Elision in Persian words  
(e.g. Abu'l-Fazl) ' (e.g. māl-e mā'st)

## PREFACE

Human beings, according to sociological research, are created with different physical and psychological characteristics. Among them we sometimes find people of genius, who are indeed rare and exceptional persons. It seems that God wishes to show His power when He creates such geniuses. Although during the centuries their numbers have been limited, their activities caused far-reaching political, scientific and social effects. No doubt Sayyed Ahmad Kasravi was one of the most brilliant geniuses in the Iranian world of learning. Few persons comparable with him have appeared in recent centuries in Iran. As will be mentioned later in his biography, Kasravi<sup>1</sup> was born of an ordinary father and an absolutely illiterate<sup>2</sup> mother; only through his own personal ability and effort did he achieve a well deserved renown.

On the other hand, history shows that most brilliant men and people of genius possessed only a limited range of ability, and acquired only sufficient knowledge for the particular subject of their interest. They concentrated their minds on the subject which attracted them, and sometimes were so obsessed with it that they remained quite ignorant of other aspects of life. This is not true of

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1. Kasravi, Zendegani-ye man, Tehran 1323/1944.

2. M. K. Azādeh, Chera Kasravi rā koshtand. Tehran 1325/1947, p.23.

Kasravi. The variety of his interests and writings in widely different fields was the most conspicuous feature of his character. It is hard to believe that a single individual could have been so talented and have possessed such versatility of expression. He was a historian with an intense interest in all phases of history, a journalist in a very progressive way, a scholarly man of letters, and a proponent of sociological and political ideas for building a more advanced society. Undoubtedly a person with such extraordinary brain-power and energy deserves admiration. He was brought up in a very primitive household, where even the necessities of life were lacking, and his mind was developed and shaped in a very simple intellectual environment. His teacher was a mollá in the maktab<sup>1</sup> (Qor'án school) of Hokmábád, a village on the outskirts of Tabriz, and the only available books for him were Sa'di's Golestán, a few chapters (surehs) of the Qor'án, and some religious tracts.

No more needs to be said about Kasravi's genius. I leave the reader to his books. The field of study, however, is so vast that within the limits of this thesis I unfortunately cannot try to analyse Kasravi's character in much detail. Nevertheless it has been a great honour for me to do research about such an extraordinary and distinguished

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1. Kasravi, Zendegáni-ye man, p.9.

man, especially as I appear to be the first person to undertake this task in the British Isles; and I hope that my modest work will be acceptable to its readers.

My thanks go first and foremost to my supervisor Mr. F. R. C. Bagley without whose kindness and generous help this thesis would have been impossible. I would also like to thank my friend Miss Riffat Hassan for her help, and my father and also the followers of Kasravi in Tehran who obtained rare material for me.

Since the first submission of this thesis in July 1968, I have gathered some more information about Kasravi's life and personality and about the sources of his ideas, and I have compared some of his ideas with other contemporary ideas.

These additions appear as Appendixes A, B and C.

I have also made corrections in the text of the thesis and in the bibliography.

Iran, during Kasravi's lifetime underwent profound political and social changes, which must have greatly influenced the development of his personality and ideas. These influences cannot always be traced in detail, and a discussion of them would require a study of Iran's 20th Century history which would be far too long for a thesis such as this, especially when the reader is likely to be well-informed about Iranian history. In Appendix A, however, I have included some new information about influences on Kasravi, most of which I attained in Tehran from persons who knew him.

## CHAPTER ONE

### KASRAVI'S BIOGRAPHY

#### Kasravi's Private Life. His Family, Birthplace, and Childhood.

In Hokmábád, just outside Tabriz, there lived in the 19th century a family of the Moslem (Shi'ite) clergy.<sup>1</sup> Their occupation was farming, and they were also moral leaders in the village. Kasravi's grandfather Áqá Mir Ahmad was the emám (prayer-leader) in the village mosque. His father Áqá Mir Qásem had studied theology, but instead of succeeding his father at the mosque, as was traditional, he went into business. His ambition, however, was to make one of his own sons take the ancestral place in the mosque. This wish was fulfilled when his fourth son, to whom he gave his father's name Ahmad, was born in 1890.<sup>2</sup> The boy was the Kasravi who forms the subject of this thesis.

#### Kasravi's Education and Teachers.

In accordance with the customs and traditions of their class, Kasravi's parents sent him to the maktab when he was six years old. At that time maktabas were numerous in Iran. The maktab of Hokmábád was run by a mollá named Mollá Bakhsh 'Ali. After the Constitutional revolution of 1906

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1. The spiritual leaders of Islam in Iran are in principal only religious scholars, but in practice fulfil the social role of a clergy. The ordinary clergymen are called Mollá or Akhond, and the most learned clergymen are called Mojtahed.
  2. Zendegani-ye man, p.6.

and reform of the government, modern civilization began to penetrate into all spheres of life, and particularly into education. Although most of the mollás disapproved of the establishment of new-model schools and introduction of reformed teaching methods, some of them were very much fascinated by the progressive way of living of the Europeans; and accordingly they themselves began to establish new schools in the centres of the cities. Nevertheless Kasravi finished the preliminary part of his education, which lasted four years, in the maktab. He studied the Qorán, the Golestán, and other books such as the Jámé'-ye 'Abbási,<sup>1</sup> the Tarassol,<sup>2</sup> the Abváb ol-Janán,<sup>3</sup> and the Monsha'át of Mirzá Mahdi Khán,<sup>4</sup> in both the Arabic and the Persian languages. If he had wanted to fulfil his father's wish, he should have gone to Najaf, the best centre for Shi'ite religious studies, to get the proper degree (ejázeh); but he was now averse to becoming a clergyman, and in any case his father's death and the family's resultant financial difficulties did not allow him to go to Najaf to continue his education. Kasravi was obliged to abandon his formal studies for some time, and took over his father's business, a carpet factory; but he used to study in his leisure

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1. By Shaykh Bahá' ol-Din 'Ámoli (953/1547-1030/162).

2. By Abd ol-Ghaffar Hamadani.

3. By Mollá Mohsen-e Fayz (c.1006/1597-8-1090/1680).

4. Mirzá Mahdi Khán Astarabadi (12th/18th century).

*I have not been able to find particulars of these books. From the title, (1) and (3) could seem to be shakhs (Hachik) books while (2) and (4) could seem to be text books of literary composition.*

moments. The heads of the family later persuaded him to resume his education. His father's friend and business associate, Hájj Mirzá Mohsen, who was also their distant relative, did most to change his mind, and was most persistent in this respect.

The second part of Kasravi's education began when he entered a school at Tabriz called the Madraseh Tálebiyeh, where his teacher was named Mollá Mohsen. Kasravi in four months read the whole of the books Sarf-e Mir,<sup>1</sup> Tasrif,<sup>2</sup> and 'Ávamel,<sup>3</sup> which were supposed to require four years of study. The teacher was impressed, and the other students were jealous. Later Kasravi entered another school called the Madraseh Sádeqiyeh. The first branch of science which attracted his attention was astronomy.<sup>4</sup> He also studied Arabic grammar.

At last Kasravi reached the standard which enabled him to obtain an ejáزه and take his grandfather's place in the mosque of Hokmábád. He did not remain long in that office, according to his own writings.<sup>5</sup> He worked as a mollá during the year 1912; but since he expressed anticlerical opinions, and spoke in a different way from the other mollás, very soon the congregation forsook him, and he was left alone

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1. Sarf-e Mir, by Mir Sayyed Sharif Jorjani.

2. Tasrif, by 'Abdol-Vahab ebn Ebrahim Zanjani.

3. 'Avamel, by 'Abdol-Qader Jorjani, and its Sharh by Mollá Mohsen.

4. He studied astronomy on the basis of the Hay'at-e-Batlamiyús (Astronomy of Ptolemy) from a book known as the Astronomy of Talebov which was originally written by Flammarion in French; later 'Abdol-Rahim Talebov (1834-1910) translated it from Russian into Persian.

5. Zendegani-ye man, Tehran 1323/1944, p.39.

in the mosque. Many of the mollás accused him of defending the new Constitutional regime. At that time Tabriz<sup>1</sup> was occupied by the Russians, who put to death a number of leading constitutionalists. This was a coincidence which enabled the mollás to talk about Kasravi in the most unsympathetic manner; and in consequence the mosque gradually emptied. However, Kasravi had come to hate his profession, and he therefore took the opportunity and left it. He started enthusiastically to study mathematics, arithmetic, physics, algebra and astronomy. He had nobody to teach him, and learned through his own perseverance and talent. At the same time he read literature, and completed his study of Arabic. As he himself has mentioned in his autobiography, he could recite the whole Qor'án by heart.<sup>2</sup>

The third and last phase of Kasravi's education took place in the maktab of Shaykh Tutunchi, who was a student of the great 19th-century <sup>philosopher</sup> Aqa Shaykh Hádi Sabzavári.<sup>3</sup> For two years Kasravi studied philosophy and logic, and reached the highest position in the school before he left in 1915. He did not then give up studying, but continued until he died, bringing to reality the proverb "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave." He studied various subjects such as history, law, and languages including Esperanto, Armenian, and Pahlavi.

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1. Zendegani-ye man, Tehran 1323/1944, p.45.

2. Ibid. p.43.

3. See E. C. Browne, Literary History of Persia, vol.4, London 1924, 4th ed. Cambridge 1953, pp 436-439.

In 1915 Kasravi became interested in the English language, and entered the American Memorial School at Tabriz, at first as a student, even though he was old enough to be a teacher; later they gave him a lecturership in Arabic. He started to learn English simultaneously from "teach yourself books" and from a fellow teacher named Jalil Hāshemzādeh Fallāh.<sup>1</sup> Kasravi learnt the Pahlavi language in a class run by Professor Ernst Herzfeld, the famous American orientalist, who was in Iran as a supervisor and specialist in archaeology. Kasravi's interest and proficiency in Pahlavi were immense. He later translated the Kārnāmak-e Ardashir Bābakān from Pahlavi into Persian. He learnt Esperanto from a "teach yourself book."

#### Kasravi's Journeys and Occupations.

Kasravi was short of money after his father's death. He could have remained a mollā and earned a living thereby, but preferred poverty to being a mollā. For a short while he <sup>2</sup> took charge of his father's carpet factory; but he lost the capital which his father had left behind, and then closed the factory. This was his first venture in business. Being hard pressed for money, he began<sup>3</sup> to sell his most precious possessions, which were his books. His financial

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1. Zendegani-ye man, p.63.

2. Ibid., p.24.

3. Ibid., p.53.

position gradually became weaker and weaker, and he sometimes had to borrow money from his father's friends. He resolved to go back into the carpet business, as this had been his father's business; but he was not really interested in it, and finally gave up the idea. He then bought a stocking-knitting machine<sup>1</sup>, but the machine was not efficient; so he again sold some of his books and bought another machine as a replacement. Soon afterwards its needle broke, and no replacement for it was available in the market; so again his work came to a stop. It is remarkable that in spite of all these difficulties Kasravi never lost interest in his studies. During this time he was mostly studying history and doing historical research. His first salaried post was the teaching job which he obtained in 1916 at the American Memorial School, where he remained one year. At the end of the year he felt emotionally and mentally exhausted; so he made a journey to Russian-ruled<sup>2</sup> Caucasia, where he stayed for forty-five days and met quite a number of broad-minded people and reformers. At the beginning of the next school year, he went back to his post at the Memorial School, but did not stay long. He had<sup>3</sup> an argument with one of the Armenian teachers, who reprehended him in a most offensive

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1. Zendegani-ye man, p.54.

2. Ibid., p.70.

3. Ibid., p.64.

way. Mr. Jessop, the principal of the school, attempted to mediate and make peace between them; but Kasravi was so hurt that he resigned from his post. After this<sup>1</sup> he wrote a book on Arabic grammar called Al-Najmat ol-Dorriyeh. He received many appreciations of this book, and the branch of the Ministry of Education<sup>2</sup> at Tabriz thanked him officially. Since the civil law in Iran at that time had a very close relationship with Islamic law, which was often applied in civil cases, Kasravi decided to study Islamic law. After a few years without any paid occupation, he obtained an employment with the Ministry of Justice at Tabriz<sup>3</sup> in 1920. He started as a prosecutor, but as will be mentioned later, his situation became difficult, because he had disputes with Khiábáni,<sup>4</sup> the leader of the Democrats in Ázarbáiján, who had rebelled against the central government. He was obliged to leave Tabriz and move to Tehrán, where he found employment

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1. Taken from the book Ahmad Kasravi, by Parviz Shahriári and M. Nematollahi, Tehran 1325/1946, p.10.
  2. Zendegani-ye man, p.77.
  3. K. M. Azadeh, Chera Kasravi-rá koshtand, Tehrán 1324/1945, p.10.
  4. A leading mollá of Tabriz who became a Democrat deputy. In 1911 he migrated to Russian Caucasia, but returned in 1914. He wanted to free Iran from foreign domination and founded a new National Democrat party at Tabriz. After the central government had signed the Anglo-Iranian treaty of August 19th, 1919, he rebelled and set up a republican government in Azarbaijan, which he called "Azadestan" ("Land of the Free"). He was defeated and killed in September 1920.

under the Ministry of Education as teacher of Arabic in a high school called Servat. In the winter of 1921 the Minister of Justice decided to reform the judicial system in Ázarbáiján, and invited Kasravi to the Ministry's service. He was appointed a prosecutor of the court at Tabriz. Although he was reluctant to serve the government, he accepted this post because he liked the work. Judicial service was a worthy position for him, even if he was to have some unpleasant memories of it, and as he used to say it was a real help for the mass of the people. He left Tehran for Tabriz in 1921 when the roads between the two cities were blocked by heavy snow; the journey took twenty days. As soon as he arrived he started work. This job also did not last long - only three weeks. On February 21, 1921, a coup d'état took place in Tehran, and Sayyed Zia-ol-Din Tabátabái<sup>1</sup> became Prime Minister. The new government closed the Ministry of Justice and sent a telegram to Tabriz ordering the closure of its local branch. This event caused Kasravi serious hardship; but he had an amazing ability to cope with all situations. He lived at first by borrowing money from his relatives. After consultation with a number of learned men, he established a group for spreading and developing the Esperanto language at Tabriz. At this time

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1. Parviz Shahriári and Mahdi Ne'matolláhi, Ahmad Kasravi, p.11.

his wife died, and this sad event was one of his greatest sorrows; he mourned and lamented for many days. <sup>(11)a</sup>

Kasravi's journeys to Tehran, Mázandarán, Zanján, Khuzestán and Damavand.

In 1922 Kasravi left his two motherless daughters with his brother, and set out for Tehran. After twenty-two days of exhausting travel, he arrived at the capital and presented himself to the Ministry of Justice. The Minister apologized for not having a vacancy for him in Tehran, and suggested that he might serve in one of the provincial cities. In spite of his disappointment, he accepted the suggestion. He was sent to Sári<sup>1</sup> in Mázandarán; but after two months the Ministry again closed his office, and he had to leave the place, which had inspired him with its natural beauty and refreshing weather and evergreen trees. He was then sent to Damávand<sup>2</sup> as presiding Judge of the court, and not long afterwards was transferred to Zanján<sup>3</sup> in the same capacity. He was most efficient and courageous in his work. He found this the most interesting part of his judicial career. He continued his studies and wrote a book, which required a great effort, on the history of Ázarbáiján. This is his Tárikh-e hej dah-sáleh-ye Ázarbáiján (Eighteen years of history of Ázarbáiján). He also began to do research

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1. Chera Kasravi-ra koshtand, p.10.

2. Ibid., p.11.

3. Ibid., p.11.

(11) She was his cousin, and she was very young when she died.  
later he married again in Tehran.

about the origins of the Turkish language.

In 1924, after Sardár-e-Sepáh (later to be Rezá Sháh) had become prime minister, the government resolved to establish an efficient system of justice in all parts of the country, including Khuzestán which had been governed semi-independently for many years by Shaykh Khaz'al. One of the government's most important tasks was to install a branch of the Ministry of Justice and set up regular law courts in that province. The Ministry of Justice decided to appoint Kasravi to Khuzestán, thinking that he would be a very suitable person to undertake this mission. Kasravi agreed to go to Khuzestán, but insisted that he should have freedom of action. They gave him what he wanted without any hesitation. Sardár-e Sepáh<sup>1</sup> spoke personally to him about the importance of his mission, and emphasized the need to establish a strong and efficient judicial system in Khuzestán.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi left Tehrán with the postal carriage (chápár), and made his way to Khuzestán by way of Qazvin, Hamadán, Kermánsháh, Qasr-e-Shirin and Baghdád. Perhaps it will puzzle the reader why he had to go out of the country in order to reach Khuzestán; but at that time there were no internal roads to Khuzestán, and the only way open was through Iraq. Kasravi served for

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1. Chera Kasravi-rá Koshtand, p.11.

2. P. Shahriari and M. Ne'matolláhi, Ahmad Kasravi, p.12.

two years in Khuzestán, where he strove very hard to establish a judicial organisation. After the reform of the Ministry of Justice by 'Ali Akbar Dávar, Kasravi for a short time held the position of public prosecutor in Tehran; but as he states in his book, Ten Years in the Ministry of Justice, he<sup>1</sup> refused to conform with certain requests of the police and of the Minister. As a result he resigned his post in 1928, and set up in private law practice, which brought him material ease. In 1929 Kasravi<sup>2</sup> was again invited to join the staff of the criminal law court of Tehran. He served there for twenty-four months, finally attaining the position of public prosecutor of the criminal court of Tehran. This was his last official post. He resigned, and thereafter disassociated himself for ever from public legal administration. His enemies, however, were not satisfied, and in 1933, when Sadr ol-Ashraf became the Minister of Justice, Kasravi's licence to practise as a private lawyer was withdrawn.

#### College Teaching.

After Kasravi's resignation from the service of the Ministry of Justice, he again suffered material hardship. He continued with his researches into language and history, and was invited to teach in the Military Academy, and in

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1. Dah sal dar 'Adlieh, Tehran 1325/1947, pp 237-239.

2. Chera Kasravi-ra Koshtand, p.12.

the College of Theology (Ma'qul va Manqul) in Tehran.

### Kasravi's Social and Political Activities.

In the years after the Constitutional struggle and the first world war, the desire for change pervaded Iran, and on October 31, 1925, the Qájár dynasty was deposed. Naturally Kasravi was deeply stirred by this event. His emotional involvement led him to produce not only scholarly works, but also writings of a sociological and political nature. Tabriz had been the centre of revolutionary movements in Iran, and the instigators fired the minds of the people by denouncing monarchy as a dictatorial and cruel method of government. Their words brought fever to the hearts of the people. Sometimes Kasravi would go to revolutionary meetings, and it was there that the seeds of his political thoughts were first sown. His first teacher in politics had been a broad-minded young man called Hájj Áqá Khán, who was also expert in the French language. He familiarized Kasravi with the meaning of monarchy, and recommended to him two books which were to open his eyes to a wider field of politics. These were the Siahatnameh-ye Ebráhim Beg<sup>1</sup> and the Ketáb-e Ahmad.<sup>2</sup> Under the influence of these two books, Kasravi's thought underwent a radical change.<sup>3</sup> His friends and fellow thinkers at Tabriz were

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1. By Hájj Zayn ol-'Ábedin Marághei (d.c.1910).

2. By Hájj 'Abdol-Rahim Talebov (1844-1910).

3. Zendegani-ye man, p.48

Mirzá 'Ali Hay'at, Mirzá Báqer Tali'eh and 'Abdol-Hamid Qiási. After a little while, however, they parted company with Kasravi because of his disagreement with their way of thinking. Later Kasravi began to associate with a circle of enlightened men in Tabriz, including Mirzá Qásem Foyuzát, who was the leader of Ázarbáiján's educational reform movement, Mirzá Ja'far Khámme'i who was a very liberally minded man, Mirzá Mohammad 'Ali Safvat, and Shaykh Mohammad Khiábáni, who was the leader of the local Democrat party. Finally we must mention Rezá Sattárzádeh who was Kasravi's best friend. This<sup>1</sup> friendship was never broken and lasted until Kasravi's death. Sattárzádeh followed Kasravi step by step in the evolution of his political and sociological ideas. The influence of the Iranian Constitutional movement lay at the root of Kasravi's way of thinking. His admiration for constitutionalism was heartfelt; even when his life was in danger, he never failed to uphold it, and in later years he continued to be a great defender of liberty. Finally his life was sacrificed for the cause of freedom.

#### Kasravi's Membership of the Democrat Party.

The establishment of a Constitutional government in Iran did not entirely fulfil the hopes and desires of the

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1. Zendegáni-ye man, p.49.

people; and because of the people's ignorance of the meaning of constitutionalism, there was a great deal of confusion in regard to the need for social reforms. After every great revolution, a certain amount of confusion follows, depending on how far the people have progressed. As a result of the superstition and ignorance in which the people of Iran were then steeped, it was only natural that they were unable to digest the new order of things. The<sup>1</sup> Russian revolution in 1917 had been both an example and an opportunity for Iranians to raise themselves in the cause of liberty; for with the Russians busy with their own revolution, it was unlikely that they would interfere with Iran's internal affairs. In Tabriz the revolutionaries became particularly active at that time. Shaykh Mohammad Khiabani in company with his fellow thinkers formed a new Democrat party in 1918, in opposition to the legal Democrats, and Kasravi joined him. Between the two factions<sup>2</sup> there was constant disagreement and dissension, until Kasravi as mediator with a group of friends made peace between them and established one party.

Kasravi's Charitable Activities.

Meanwhile Kasravi was busy with his scientific and historical researches. At the same time he never neglected charitable work, and whenever possible tried hard to help

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1. Zendegani-ye man, p.77.

2. Ibid., p.78.

the poor. The leaders of the Democrat party used to hold meetings to discuss the problems of poverty in Iran and Ázarbáiján and attempt to get rid of it. Gradually<sup>1</sup> they organized small societies among themselves and persuaded wealthy people to help the poor. They carefully ascertained the numbers and names of the destitute in all parts of Tabriz and its surroundings, and helped everybody to get a certain amount of bread according to a ration which they fixed. Hokmábád was the only neglected area, because it was under the control of mollás who kept the simple peasants away from these societies. They announced their disapproval that the people should get bread from the Democrat organization. Soon,<sup>2</sup> however, the inhabitants of the Hokmábád area could no longer resist, as they had been underfed for a long period of time and their children were starving. They decided to appeal to Kasravi, as he was a very sympathetic person who would not refuse them; and on the following day, he managed to bring them a ration of bread. Kasravi's Disagreement with Khiábáni.<sup>3</sup>

From the day when Kasravi joined the Democrat party, he was considered one of the most important figures in the community. His relationship with Shaykh Mohammad Khiábáni was very good; the Shaykh greatly respected Kasravi, and

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1. Zendegáni-ye man, p.80. This took place in 1918, when there was a lot of poverty and starvation in Tabriz.

2. Zendegáni-ye man, p.81.

3. Chera Kasravi-ra Koshtand, p.7.

Kasravi regularly attended the party's weekly meetings. In 1919, when hunger and poverty were still prevalent, Ottoman Turkish troops replaced the Russians in Ázarbáiján. Their principles and purposes were entirely different from those of the Democrats, whom they ignored from the beginning. They arrested a number of Democrats and expelled them from Tabriz. In the hope of increasing the number of their partisans, the Ottoman troops put out a great deal of publicity, and even attracted a few Democrats; they also organised an association called Etteháð ol-Eslám. Fortunately their occupation of Tabriz did not last long. The first world war ended with the defeat of the Ottoman Turks in October 1918 and of the Germans in November 1918. The central government then appointed as governor of Ázarbáiján Mokarram ol-Molk, who was bitterly opposed to the Democrats. Kasravi and the other members held meetings to decide what should be done. One of those who attended was Sayyed Jalil Ardabili, who was one of the greatest advocates of liberty and revolution. At these meetings they decided to expel some members who were not behaving patriotically. The first person to be expelled, by name Mirzá Taqi Khán, was a very close friend of Shaykh Mohammad Khiábáni and had wanted to gain favour with the Ottoman Turks when Tabriz was under their control. When Khiábáni learned of Kasravi's decision,

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he was annoyed and asked Mirzá Taqi Khán to rejoin the party. Kasravi and several other members were deeply offended and criticized Khiábáni's action. Eventually they parted from the Democrats, and Kasravi had to leave Tabriz; he stayed in Shahin Dagħ for a short time, and afterwards in April 1920 set out for Tehran.

The Ázádegán (Free Men) Party.

Ázádegán (Free Men) is the name of an association which Kasravi founded in 1933. Its members try hard to spread Kasravi's ideas about different aspects of life in Iran. Their politics in some respects were different from those of any other association. Although they did not make a great deal of publicity to attract people's attention, they persevered in publishing their organs, Paymán, a monthly periodical (1933-1942) and Parcham, a newspaper (1942-1944), because this was the only way to warn the people about the realities of life. This group is still active to-day, although it does not publish a great deal of propaganda. The<sup>1</sup> association was first established in Tehrán in 1933, and as it gradually became more active, branches were added in almost every city. The chief aim was to spread Kasravi's ideas by publishing his books. During the first seven years, i.e. from 1933 to 1941, the Ázádegán, even though they encountered many difficulties, were able to publish Paymán.

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1. Ahmad Kasravi, p.14.

They also held weekly meetings in Kasravi's house every Friday night, as they had no other place in which to meet. In addition to this, they managed to hold small private meetings in Tabriz and other cities, although they had to be careful to behave discreetly so as not to give any excuse to government authorities for criticism. Nevertheless the police arrested Kasravi and imprisoned him<sup>1</sup> for nine days; but they released him when they were unable to find any crime of which they could accuse him. The incident made Kasravi more confident and encouraged him to show greater firmness and determination in the pursuit of his ideals. This state of affairs persisted until 1942, when censorship of Paymān and police supervision of the party's activities were discontinued. Kasravi's followers then began to work with more enthusiasm, and at one of the meetings Kasravi emphasized the need to reconstitute the association as an officially registered political party. The principles of the Ázádegán party were laid down in that meeting. It was to be a party unlike any other. Politics were the main subject of discussion, because of their connection with social affairs, and an attempt was made to draw up a definite party programme. It was not the ambition of the members to gain important positions or occupy parliamentary

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1. Kasravi, Yakom-e Daymáh va Dástán-ash, Tehran 1338/1959.

seats. Similarly their newspaper was not to be like any other. As the circulation of their newspaper gradually increased in Tehran and other cities, they needed a more elaborate organization and became more active than before. They founded new branches here and there, and continued to work vigorously until the day Kasravi was assassinated. At present the Ázádegán, or "Kasraviyun" as they are commonly called, continue to propagate Kasravi's political teachings without making headline news, and occasionally republish his books.

#### Parcham Newspaper and Paymán Magazine.

While carrying on his researches in history and other subjects, Kasravi used to write scholarly articles for newspapers. They were published in Iranian and also in foreign newspapers, such as al-Moqtataf of Egypt and al-'Erfan of Saydá (Sidon). As has been noticed, Kasravi thought that the press was the worthiest and most effective instrument for guiding Iranian society towards a better way of living. He thought that it was a necessity in every society. He expressed his ideas about life and liberty in Paymán (Promise), the first issue of which was published in December 1933.<sup>1</sup> During<sup>1</sup> the first years Kasravi frequently wrote about the

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1. Ruz beh Paymán 42, Tehran 1964 (published by the Azadegan party), p.3.

2. Chera Kasravi-ra Koshtand, p.26.

europeanization of Iran. He criticized Iranian susceptibility to European influences, and pointed out the folly of abandoning Iranian customs and traditions merely in order to adopt those of the Europeans. In the second<sup>1</sup> year of Paymán, Kasravi wrote mainly about Persian poets and tried hard to show the harmful nature of their ideas, especially for the young generation. Paymán's articles aroused controversy and animosity in those days. Poets in particular were resentful and made great efforts to refute him. In<sup>2</sup> the third year of Paymán Kasravi criticized philosophy and materialism. Paymán was published for seven years in all. After the formal establishment of the Ázádegán party in 1941, Parcham<sup>3</sup> was brought out as the party's official organ. It continued to be published until 1942 when the government banned many publications, including Parcham. Later, after being granted full publishing rights, Parcham appeared once a fortnight. A total of twelve volumes of Parcham was published. In 1944 Parcham was again prohibited. Later it appeared as a weekly newspaper, but only for a short while. The authorities refused permission for Kasravi to continue his publications, accusing him of disrespect for Islam. Kasravi

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1. Cherá Kasravi-rá Koshtand, p. 34.

2. Ibid. p.47.

3. Ahmad Kasravi, p.14.

had tried to present his arguments to the people in the columns of Parcham, which contained articles about the most profound human problems. His aim was to combat harmful influences and individual dishonesty in Iranian society. He spoke openly about different religions and discussed their respective defects. He also spoke about the inefficiency of governmental authorities, and courageously criticized the armed forces. All these actions won him many enemies.

#### Kasravi's Religious and Sociological Ideas.

In 1928, when Kasravi left the Ministry of Justice, he withdrew for a while from social life and in the same year travelled to Gilán. He was very much impressed by the beautiful scenery of that province, and thought a great deal about God. He came to the conclusion that man should be able to live in peace and happiness, because the merciful God has given him everything: so if there is still unhappiness, we must search for the reason and eradicate it from our life. Kasravi thought that through the people's faith he could find the pointer to the right way of living. Scientific advance, however, was undermining the people's religious beliefs. Kasravi was convinced that behind all material things there are spiritual realities to which humanity must turn in its quest for peace and happiness.

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He considered these matters for three years, and eventually wrote a book Áyin<sup>1</sup> which contains his ideas about life and about ultimate truth. This book was banned and has long been unobtainable. In all his books and writings on religious and political matters, Kasravi tried to show the immaturity of the different sects of Islam, and also openly discussed Christianity and its defects. He said that all religions exercise a benevolent influence and serve as guides for society. Christianity and Islam, in his opinion were devised simply to guide and lead mankind towards happiness through the ages; but people had changed these two great religions and debased them. History shows that Islam brought the uncivilized Arabs together and produced an empire out of the primitive and simple Arab society. This was not just because of Mohammad's understanding, so Kasravi thought, but thanks to God's will. Kasravi held Mohammad in high respect, and considered him one of the greatest men in the world. He was firmly opposed to sects which broke away from Islam, such as the Baha'is, whose philosophy and way of living were both repugnant to him. Kasravi believed in God, for he says<sup>2</sup> "This organized world of ours was created by God." For him there could be no doubt

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1. Áyin, published in two volumes. Tehran, 1312/1934.

2. Kasravi, Varjavand Bonyad, Tehran, 1322/1944, p.6.

that this wonderful universe has a creator, who is all-powerful and also merciful. Although we human beings are not able to see God directly, Kasravi<sup>1</sup> thought that we can see God through the masterpieces of nature. From the religious point of view, Kasravi was a realist. He was equally opposed to materialism and to fanciful idealism. He<sup>2</sup> was convinced that humanity's failure has been partly due to belief in wrong ideas.

### Kasravi's Relationship with the Mollás<sup>3</sup>

Before the winning of the constitution and even after that time until the beginning of Rezá Sháh's reign, mollás and religious leaders were influential in Iran. They had a hand in all aspects of the people's life, and were also responsible for the administration of justice. To a considerable extent, payments had to be made to mollás where taxes are now paid to the government, and the people's personal affairs such as marriage and divorce were controlled by them. Consequently even the government had to comply with the wishes of the mollás. Realizing that even the Shah was in the power of the mollás, Kasravi from the start of his career demanded that they should be removed from the political and administrative scene. In fact many or perhaps most of the mollás in those days were not sincere and trust-

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1. Varjávand Bonyád, p.15.

2. Ibid, p.42.

3. Zendegani-ye man, pp 49-53.

worthy religious figures, and religion merely provided a cloak for their dishonesty. Kasravi started to open the people's eyes by showing the actual facts, and the mollás became his worst enemies. The mass of the people were then illiterate, and the majority of them were absolutely ignorant. They were suspicious of all classes. When the mollás accused Kasravi of disrespect for Islam, the people were ready to believe their accusations. Kasravi and the mollás never became reconciled. Kasravi withstood all his difficulties singlehanded and fought bravely with influential mollás; his books on Shi'ism, Sufism and Bahá'ism (Shi'ehgari, Sufigari, Bahá'igari) prove this. He also used to talk with different religious leaders. During his time as a teacher in the American Memorial School, he met two Bahá'is<sup>1</sup> who were trying to gain influence over the students, and set out to demonstrate the weaknesses of their ideas and inconsistencies of their theories.

#### Kasravi's Scholarly Achievements.

The value of Kasravi's researches in the fields of history and languages has never been disputed, even by his opponents. Even if we neglect or forget all his efforts in other fields, we cannot ignore the immense work which he accomplished in writing the history of the Iranian Cons-

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1. Zendegani-ye man, pp 64-65. One of them was named Mirzá Mahdi, the other Sobhi. (*later well known as a short story and fairy tale writer and was a radio speaker*)

titutional movement. His method of recording historical events was entirely different from that of previous Iranian historians. He searched to find the truth of every statement and never accepted as self-sufficient the authority of previous historians. His efforts in writing other historical books such as Tárikh-e Pánsad Sáleh-ye Khuzestán and Shahriárán-e Gomnám were also very considerable. Needless to say he is one of Iran's most important historians. His valuable researches and investigations into language put him among the country's great linguists. During his short life he produced more than eighty books on different subjects, including history, languages, politics, sociology, and literature, and also translations. He did all this in spite of the fact that most of the time he had no regular means of livelihood. There are very few examples in Iran or elsewhere of such a prolific and meticulous writer. He became well known not only in Iran, but also in scholarly and academic circles abroad. Although Kasravi was certainly an ambitious man, he did not write books to win fame or favour, but worked purely for the sake of giving full expression to his thoughts and knowledge. He became a member of the

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1. Royal Asiatic Society of London<sup>1</sup>
2. Royal Geographical Society of London<sup>2</sup>
3. Academy of Science of Leningrad.<sup>3</sup>

Kasravi was not only one of the most productive writers in Iran, but also one of the most versatile. Authors who can write about such a wide range of subjects are indeed rare. In addition to his books he wrote articles, which, as has been mentioned, were published in foreign and Iranian newspapers.

#### The first attack.

Besides being a historian and writer, Kasravi was a politician who criticized the flaws of his society; and such a man cannot hope to lead an uneventful life. Kasravi's greatest enemies, as already stated, were the mollás. At last<sup>4</sup> one day, when he was with two friends, he was attacked by the leader of the Fedá'íán-e Eslám (an extremist politico-religious group), namely Navváb Safavi, who shot and stoned him.<sup>5</sup> He was taken to hospital. Kasravi said, "I will not die. Although I am physically frail, I am strong in determination, and I have so much to do." The doctors saved

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1. Kasravi became a member of this Society after he had published his book Ázari. Later Sir Denison Ross made a summarized English translation of part of it (see below p.
  2. Dah sál dar Adliéh, p.245.
  3. The Russian Embassy bought ten copies of Kasravi's book Ázari
  4. This attack took place in 1324/1946 in Tehran.
  5. Ahmad Kasravi, p.14.

Kasravi's life, but unfortunately the police did not prosecute the culprits; they freed them after fifteen days, and detained instead some of Kasravi's innocent friends.

### Kasravi's last days and his death.

At first Kasravi's enemies among the mollás only attacked him indirectly; but later they changed their tactics. They could not refute the logic of his arguments and lacked the courage to be reasonable and discuss their differences of opinion with him, because they knew that they were not mentally strong enough to withstand him. Already the Fedá'íán-e Islám had once assaulted him physically, but had not been successful. Many mollás then began to attack his followers by criticizing their association. Eventually they accused Kasravi himself of having burnt the Qor'án, and made a court case of it; but Kasravi was resolute, calm and unafraid, and also was a very knowledgeable lawyer. He was confident of his ability to prove his enemies' deceit and malice towards him. On the 20th Esfand<sup>1</sup> 1323/12th March 1946, when Kasravi was with a friend called Mohammad Taqi Haddádpur in the Public Prosecutor's Office in the Ministry of Justice at Tehran, he was attacked by two brothers Mohammad Hosayn and Mohammad 'Ali Emámi (also members of the Fedá'íán-e Islam) and was stabbed to death. It was ironic that they should have

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1. Cherá Kasravi-rá Koshtand, p.2.

killed him in the Ministry of Justice, for there can be no doubt that their treacherous deed will be permanently recorded in history. Even after Kasravi's death, his enemies were not satisfied. They refused him Moslem burial. After three days his family and friends removed his body to a place called Ábak in the Shemirán (northern suburbs of Tehran). The two Emámi brothers, having completed their assignment, left the Ministry of Justice quite fearlessly. They were sentenced to a short period in prison, but were soon released. Nature, however, is revengeful, and most criminals have to pay sooner or later for their crimes. One of the Emámi brothers was hanged some years later for killing a former Prime Minister Hazhir.<sup>1</sup> Kasravi died in this way after fifty-five years of struggle and honourable life; but really he is not dead, because his works live on.

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1. 'Abdol-Hosayn Hazhir (Prime Minister in 1948, later Minister of the Court), was assassinated by Emámi, the murderer of Kasravi, in November 1949 at Tehran.

## CHAPTER TWO

KASRAVI AS A HISTORIAN

Although Kasravi wrote different books on various subjects, his speciality was history, and this was undoubtedly the field in which he did his most important research. He certainly merits the title of great historian. The importance and value of his achievement as a historian will be discussed later, after particulars of his historical works have been briefly outlined. They include the following.

1. Shahriārān-e Gommān (Forgotten rulers), Tehran, 1307/1928.
2. Tārīkh-e Plutarch, (Plutarch's Lives) Tehran 1316/1937.
3. Shaykh Safi va Tabār-ash (Shaykh Safi and his ancestry), Tehran 1323/1944. First published in Āyandeh.
4. Tārīkh-e Mosha'sha'īān, yā Pānsadsāleh-ye Khuzestān (History of Mosha'sha'is, or Five centuries of the history of Khuzestān), Tehran 1312/1933, reprinted 1325/1946 and 1333/1954.
5. Paydayesh-e America (The discovery of America), Tehran 1324/1946.
6. Kārnāmak-e Ardashir-e Bābakān (The Pahlavi Romance of Ardashir), Tehran 1324/1945.
7. Tārīkh-e Mashruteh-ye Irān (History of the Iranian Constitutional Movement), ~~Tehran 1340/1961~~. Supplement To payman 1316-2. FIRST 2 bakhsh in 3 vols. 1319

8. Tarikh-e hejdah-sāleh-ye Āzarbāijān (Eighteen years of the history of Āzarbāijān), Tehran 1340/1961. in / Vol. 1335

Shahriārān-e Gommān<sup>1</sup>

Main Contents, Kasravi's difficulties and aims.

Kasravi begins this book by trying to explain the Arab domination of Iran, which lasted about two centuries after the Arab conquest. Iranian rulers then appeared on the scene and gradually drove the Arabs out of Iran. It was not until the middle of the fourth century A.H. (10th century A.D.) that the Iranians completely expelled the Arabs, who were never again able to send governors to Iran from Baghdad. Kasravi thinks that the Arabs introduced the Iranian feudal system, which continued without much modification until the Safavid period. In Iran's history one can often find ten kings at one time in different parts of the country, all fighting with each other. Feudalism was thus one of the many reasons for Iran's weakness. As Kasravi remarks,<sup>2</sup> Iran's history after Islam is often a mystery, because nothing is known about many of the rulers, and none of the history books, written either in Arabic or in Persian, record all their names. The only author who had previously written about the particular rulers studied by Kasravi in this book

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1. Shahriārān-e Gommān, Tehran 1307/1928. Introduction vol.1.

2. Ibid.

(i) a

was Khalifeh Aydi Beg who lived during the Safavid period and left a historically valuable record; Kasravi mentions that he had scarcely any other source for writing "Unknown Rulers", which is in three parts. Nevertheless he did a great deal of research to find out all he could about these rulers. His purpose was to supplement the works and notes of other historians or orientalist. In the first part he speaks about three dynasties, the Justánids, Konkorids and Salárids; in the second part about the Rávvádids of Ázarbaíján, and in the third about the Shaddádids of Arrán. The writing of this book caused Kasravi immense difficulty. In it he has brought to light an important part of the history of northern and north-western Iran. He<sup>1</sup> himself admitted that there may be some mistakes in this book; but its value has been recognized by scholars such as Vladimir Minorsky and Sa'id Nafisi. Kasravi observes that although the Arabs at the height of their powers were able to expand and advance as far as France, they could not subdue the Iranian peasants in the Daylam area. May be nature helped the Daylamis to keep out invaders; yet it was not only the geography of that area which helped those peasants, but also their own courage and fortitude. Manliness was one of the well known characteristics of the people of Daylam.

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1. Shahriarán-e Gommam, vol.1, Introduction.

(1) a. served at the court of shah Tahmāsh and towards the end of his life he lived at Ardabil. He wrote a book Takmilat al-nasb in which he gives accounts of various petty rulers in Iran.

Unfortunately none of the history books tell us much about them. Kasravi tried to gain some idea of them from the writings of Arab poets. He gives a picture of the enmity between the Daylamis and the Moslem Arabs. After three hundred years the Daylamis gave up their old religion, but defeated the Arabs and even conquered Iraq and Baghdád, forcing the Caliph to obey them. Another interesting subject discussed by Kasravi is that of Arab immigration to Iran. He points out that because of the poverty of Arabia, Arabs emigrated into all the neighbouring countries, such as Syria, Iraq and Iran. Indeed Arabs had come to Iran before Islam, which only appeared in the last years of the Sásánid dynasty, and had even accepted Zorostrianism after coming to Iran. At the same time the Sásánids had always tried to prevent or restrict Arab immigration, because if it had not been checked the Arabs might within a short time have overrun and gained control of Iranian territories such as Iraq, Fárs and Khuzestán. Since the Arabs were nomads and not very civilized, they were considered a great threat to Iran's peace and liberty. For years the Iranian kings maintained a strong position, until the time when the Arabs embraced Islam. The Prophet Mohammad announced in Madinah that if the Arabs accepted his teaching, Syria and Iran would be theirs. This aroused the Arab's enthusiasm, and they set out to conquer

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other countries. As the Arabic chronicles show, when they came to Iran they not only spread the new religion but also settled in different parts of the country. Ázarbáiján was one of the provinces which attracted the Arabs, who were extremely powerful in the early days of Islam. One of the Arab rulers in Ázarbáiján was Ravvád Ázádi, whose sons ruled Tabriz and eventually brought all the Ázarbáijánis under their control. Kasravi wrote about the Ravvádids in the second volume of Shahriáran-e Gommám, and produced evidence that by origin these rulers were Arabs. Their dynasty continued to rule part of Ázarbáiján until the Mongol invasion.

The reader gets the impression that not only is Kasravi a reliable and accurate historian but also that he has a remarkable gift of bringing scenes from the distant past to life. No other contemporary Iranian scholar would have spent so much time and effort in research about these hitherto unknown rulers who were indirectly so influential in Iran's history.

The late Professor Vladimir Minorsky praised Shahriáran-e Gommám in his article Daylam in the Encyclopaedia of Islam,<sup>1</sup> and referred in one of his articles to Kasravi's remark that when the Moslem Arabs had reached as far as the river Loire

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1. V. Minorsky, article Daylam in Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., Leiden 1965, p.194.

in northern France, the Daylamites were still resisting in the mountains of northern Iran.<sup>1</sup> Kasravi was also praised for Shahriārān-e Gommām by Vahid Dastgardi,<sup>2</sup> the founder and editor of Armaghān, which was the foremost learned periodical in Iran between 1919 and 1944. Harold Bowen, in a review of Kasravi's book "<sup>Forgotten</sup> ~~Unknown~~ Rulers,"<sup>3</sup> says that Kasravi had evidently expended great pains on research, and had ingeniously combined the results into a clear and persuasive narrative.

The two volumes of the book are supplemented by useful genealogical tables. In this book Kasravi acknowledges that he was helped in his research by the works of European orientalist, but does not refrain from explicitly criticizing European orientalist. As Bowen remarks, "The present strong nationalist feeling of Persia is reflected not only in the author's aims but also in his style; he has meticulously cleansed his vocabulary of all but indispensable Arabic words, but without (so Bowen says) any unpleasing effect of strain." Although Kasravi expresses himself dissatisfied with the production of this book (he was even obliged to change printing-presses mid-way), misprints are not noticeable.

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1. V. Minorsky, article La domination des Daylamites, in Iranica, Tehran 1964, p.27 (University of Tehran Publications, No.775).
  2. V. Dastgardi, in Armaghān, year 10 (1308/1939), vol. 4, pp 244-245.
  3. Harold Bowen, Review of The Forgotten Rulers by Kasravi, J. R. A. S., 1929, pp 664-665.

### Plutarch's Lives.

This was Kasravi's favourite book. He considered this work of Plutarch,<sup>1</sup> and also the history of Herodotus,<sup>2</sup> both very trustworthy. History, as Kasravi observes, is one of the most ancient of human interests, and for centuries knowledge of historical events was passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth only, with the result that history acquired something of a fairy tale appearance. Kings sometimes recorded historical events in inscriptions on stone or wood, which also could not be trustworthy because it is not possible to tell the whole story in an inscription. Historiography only began to progress when people found out how to write on paper or parchment. The Greeks made great advances in historiography. Not very much would be known about Iran's history before Islam were it not for the information recorded by Greek historians.

Kasravi sees the following special merits in Plutarch's Lives:

1. Plutarch<sup>3</sup> is a knowledgeable and objective writer.
2. He is never unreasonable in his patriotism and is ready to praise even enemies of his nation if they deserve admiration; for example he sometimes praises Iranian kings.
3. His style is remarkably straightforward and simple, with

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1. 1st century A.D.

2. 5th century B.C.

3. Tarikh-e Plutarch, p.7.

very few ponderous sentences.

Plutarch's Lives have been translated into most living languages, and are everywhere acknowledged to be a great historical and ethical work. Kasravi translated it into Persian, not from the original language Greek, but from English.<sup>1</sup>

### Shaykh Safi va Tabár-ash

Another remarkable book which Kasravi produced is entitled Shaykh Safi va Tabár-ash (Shaykh Safi and his origin). Kasravi's basic purpose is to show that the Safavid kings were not sayyeds (i.e. descendant of the Prophet through 'Ali and Fátémeh), and that their ancestor Shaykh Safi (1252-1334) was not a Shi'ite. In this book Kasravi<sup>2</sup> recognizes that some of the Safavid kings such as Shah Esma'il (1500-1524) and Shah 'Abbás I (1588-1629) were most efficient rulers who changed Iran's entire position. Contemporary historians of the Safavid dynasty always tried to trace their descent to the seventh Emám, Musá Kázem, and thus to the Prophet. The historian Eskandar Beg, who wrote the 'Álam-ará-ye 'Abbási (history of Shah 'Abbás I) in 1616, is particularly insistent about this holy Safavid genealogy. Kasravi<sup>3</sup> points out that one must appreciate how necessary

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1. Plutarch's Lives was translated into English by Arthur H. Clough.

2. Shaykh Safi va Tabár-ash, 1323/1944, p.3.

3. Ibid., p.4.

the title sayyed was for the prestige of the Safavid kings. He quotes textual evidence showing that Shaykh Safi, in spite of the claims of later historians, did not in fact live as a sayyed, and that only after his death in 1334 did his son Shaykh Sadr ol-Din (1305-1393) usurp this title. Kasravi<sup>1</sup> shows that during the two hundred years between Shaykh Safi and Shah Esmá'il, the Safavid family, who were the spiritual heads of a sufi order (tarikat), adopted three important changes:

1. Shaykh<sup>2</sup> Safi was not a sayyed by origin, but his descendants usurped this title.
2. Shaykh Safi was a Sunnite, but in the 15th century A.D. his descendants, and in particular Shah Esmá'il, went over to Shi'ism.
3. Shaykh Safi spoke Persian, but his descendants chose to speak Turkish.

Kasravi points out that the only remaining history of the Safavids written before they came to the throne is the Safvat ol-Safa<sup>3</sup> written at an unknown date by Ebn Bazzáz Ardabili. This book was altered during the centuries, and Shah Tahmasb instructed Mir Abu'l-Fath to make a corrected version of it.<sup>4</sup> Other historians also tried to prove that the

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1. Shaykh Safi va Tabár-ash, p.4.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.5.

4. Ibid., p.31.

Safavids were sayyeds, such as the Habib ol-Siyar written in 1523 by Khwāndamir, 'Ālam-'āra-ye 'Abbāsi by Eskandar Beg, Lobb ol-Tavarikh by Mir Yahyā Qazvini, and Selselat ol-Nasab by Shaykh Hosayn Gilāni (written about 1660). Kasravi criticizes<sup>1</sup> all these works, demonstrates their errors and exaggerations, and gives reasons for his arguments. It is not possible in the limited space of this thesis to go further into the details of this interesting book.

Tārikh-e Mosha'sha'ian yā  
Pansad-saleh-ye Khuzestan

This is one of the most important historical works written by Kasravi. It is an original work, not translated nor taken from any other book. Kasravi<sup>2</sup> did all the research himself and tried hard to collect material from various sources. He covers the five centuries up to A.D. 1925, and shows how Arab tribes came to Khuzestān in the later middle ages. He says much about the Mosha'sha'i and Ka'bi (Bani Ka'b) tribes, which were unknown to historians and orientlists before Kasravi. The book thus contains a great deal of previously unavailable information, and from this point of view can undoubtedly be considered one of the most

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1. Shaykh Safi va Tabār-ash, pp 30-32.

2. Kasravi gathered his information from a few books, including (1) Ketāb-e Sayyed 'Ali, (2) Mesvād-e Javāheri, (3) Takmelat ol-Akhbar, by 'Ali ebn Mo'men, (4) Zād ol-Mosafer by Shaykh Fathollah. Other sources used by Kasravi were the *maḥdi* written in Arabic by one of the rulers of Moshashtā'i tribe at Khuzestān (Sayyed Mahammad, Moshashtā'i, Tazkerah-ye Shushtari by Sayyed Fathollah Jorjāni, also a book called Librat-nāmah which is a Persian translation of a travel-diary written by a European traveller in the reign of Shah Ismail II of Safavids.

important Iranian historical works of recent years.

The founder of Mosha'sha'is was a man called Sayyed Mahdi, who introduced himself to the people as a mahdi (divinely guided person). Kasravi<sup>1</sup> considers that this tribal dynasty lasted long because of its religious influence in Khuzestán. During the Safavid period these Arab chiefs were especially influential and powerful. The people were very attracted to Shi'ism, which the Safavid kings established as the state religion of Iran. Since the Mosha'sha'i tribe was organized on a religious basis, and since its leaders claimed descent from the Emám 'Ali and pretended to be ardent Shi'ites, they were able to maintain a strong position as hereditary governors of Khuzestán for a long time.<sup>2</sup> In fact none of the Safavid kings could drive them out of Khuzestán, or even reduce their influence in that area. Moreover the Safavids were confronted by a powerful enemy, the Ottoman Turks, and if at any time they had wanted to subdue this tribe, undoubtedly the Mosha'sha'is<sup>3</sup> could have joined the Ottomans. When the Afghans rebelled and overthrew the Safavids, the Mosha'sha'is took the opportunity to weaken the central government's influence in Khuzestán.

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1. Mosha'sha'ian, pp 12-20.

2. Ibid., p.50.

3. Even Shah 'Abbás the Great had not been able to subdue them because he did not want to let them join Iran's chief enemy the Ottoman Turks.

Iran had previously been ruled by one of the weakest Safavid kings, Shah Soltán Hosayn,<sup>1</sup> who was very much attached to the Mosha'sha'is and greatly respected their leaders. This Shah's mistaken ideas and policies partly explain why the Iranians failed to defend themselves and were defeated. Kasravi thinks that these tribes did great harm and have been responsible for Khuzestán's backwardness. Of course it must not be forgotten that Iran did not have strong and stable government in those days. A government with enough power to control all parts of the country was rare. In every part of Iran there were local potentates who were supposed to obey the central government's orders, but seldom or never did so. Consequently there was never national unity throughout Iran at any time before the reign of Rezá Sháh. This book shows how very superstitious Iranians were before the Constitutional revolution, interweaving realities with religious ideas in such a way that there was no discrimination between reality and fantasy. The religious influence in politics was at its height in the Safavid period, and the social and political life of the nation suffered greatly because of it. The Mosha'sha'i tribe kept their power in Khuzestán only because the mass of the Iranian people were

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1. Mosha'sha'ian, p.88.

so ignorant that it was almost impossible to unite them. This state of affairs continued until Rezá Khán, later Rezá Sháh, was able to get rid of the last Mosha'sha'i ruler Shaykh<sup>1</sup> Khaz'al in 1925. This book does not go into many details of the history of Khuzestán, as Kasravi could find only very few sources of information; but it gives a valuable outline of the main historical developments in the province from around 1425 to 1925. Like other works of Kasravi, it is written in a very simple style with few Arabic words.

Dr. Laurence Lockhart<sup>2</sup> in his book on the fall of the Safavid dynasty says that among the original history books which may be consulted to advantage is Kasravi's Tárikh-e Fásad Sáleh-ye Khuzestán. He adds that it is particularly valuable in elucidating the tangled history of the great Mosha'sha' family, and for what the author has to say about the Iranian occupation of Basra.

### Paydayesh-e America.<sup>3</sup>

The discovery of America marked the beginning of a new era and is regarded by historians as one of the greatest events in the history of civilization. Before Kasravi's work there was no book on this subject in Persian, except

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1. Mosha'sha'ian, p.123.
  2. Laurence Lockhart, The Fall of the Safavid Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia, Cambridge University Press, 1958, p.515.
  3. Paydayesh-e America, Tehran 1325/1946.

a very short booklet translated by Mohammad Ahmad Khan Bahádor from English to Persian and published at Calcutta. This booklet is just a description of Columbus' journeys, of which Iranians already had some idea before it was published. For years Kasravi's ambition was to produce a book on this subject. He therefore began to write articles on it in successive issues of his newspaper Parcham. Kasravi's sources were two books, both by unknown authors, one of which had been translated into Turkish by a certain 'Ali Rezá, and the other in French published at Paris. Kasravi thought that the Turkish book was the better of the two. A lady named Mrs. Nazifi helped Kasravi in translating the French book. These articles were frequently published in Bayan. Later Kasravi thought that he could use this collection of material for a book. After his resignation from the Ministry of Justice, as he hated to be lazy and had to do something to earn his living, he wrote the book although he was in poor health. Kasravi<sup>1</sup> used to say that useful books ought to be spread all over the country.

A newspaper named Alef Bá commented on Paydayesh-e America as follows:

"Iranians have long had friendly relations with America. This friendship has scarcely ever been broken. If any kind

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1. Paydayesh-e America, pp 5-6.

of misunderstanding has arisen between these two nations, Americans must not think that it has been due to enmity or hostility; it may well have been caused by the foreign policies of other nations. Americans have been most helpful towards our country. They founded schools, hospitals etc., and after the second world war they defended Iran's rights in the U.N.O. It will be well worth while if Iranians pay more attention to this friendly country's history and learn more about its political and social structure. Kasravi's book "The Discovery of America" will undoubtedly be a good source of information for them. In his impressive style of writing he carefully describes almost all the phases of this great country's discovery. As he himself mentions in his introduction, the discovery of America was one of the greatest turning points and opened a new chapter in the history of mankind."

### Kárnámak-e Ardashir-e Bábakán

One of Kasravi's greatest achievements as a scholar and historian is his translation of the Kárnámak-e Ardashir-e Bábakán (Romance of Ardashir Pápakán, the first Sásánid Shah who reigned A.D. 226-241) from original Pahlavi into modern Persian. This is one of the very few surviving Pahlavi texts which deals with Iran's ancient history, and its importance

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as such has been recognized by the world's foremost scholars and historians.<sup>1</sup> It is the only Pahlavi source which gives an idea of the glory of the Iranian Empire in Sásánid time.

*but the translation was lost.*  
During the 'Abbásid caliphate it was translated into Arabic,

It is a romance containing several interesting and amusing stories about Ardashir's life and his struggle for the throne. Kasravi's translation is good proof of his proficiency in the Pahlavi language. Although this book is not very trustworthy as history, in part because through the centuries it has definitely been altered, it is the only relevant source left from the many Pahlavi books which were destroyed or lost in the period after the Arab conquest.

In an article in Armaghán<sup>2</sup>, the writer, Dr. Kásemi, expresses great admiration for Kasravi's translation of the Kárnámak-e Ardashir-e Bábakán, and for his ability to give accurate and precise information. He says that he cannot adequately describe the impression which this book made on him. On the whole, he thinks, Kasravi is a great scholar with an immense ability for doing profound research. Besides giving information about historical events, Kasravi's history books are written in a very simple style. Iran's history

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1. e.g. Th. Nöldeke who translated it into German, E.G. Browne, and A. Christensen. E. G. Browne, Literary History of Persia, vol. I, pp 137-151.
  2. Dr. Kasemi in Armaghan, year 10 (1308/1939) vol. 4, pp 236-244.

during the Sásánid period is very largely undiscovered, because there are simply not enough sources from which to obtain information. Fortunately Kasravi's proficiency in the Pahlavi language as well as foreign languages such as Arabic, Armenian and English, has enabled him to achieve remarkable success in this field of history.

Tárikh-e Mashruteh-ye Irán  
Tárikh-e hejdah-sáleh-ye Ázarbáiján

The most important historical work written by Kasravi is his history of the Iranian Constitutional movement. This is his masterpiece, and also the most detailed and careful work yet written on this subject. It consists of two volumes, and as Tabriz was the centre of the revolution, Kasravi called the second volume "Eighteen years of the history of Ázarbáiján." His work is particularly valuable because he tried to find out about ordinary, common people who suffered during the revolution, one of his aims being to inform his readers about the sacrifices made by ordinary Iranians in this struggle. Kasravi lists a few reasons which led him to write this book.

1. Thirty years after the revolution, nobody else had shown interest in writing about it; so, realizing its importance, he undertook this work.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh-ye Irán, pp 3-5.

2. The revolution started in a simple and very genuine way, and ended in humiliation. This is the usual outcome of every great event. Ignorant persons always remember the powerful figures, but soon forget the role of the common people. Kasravi says that his aim in this book was to reveal this and to speak about their great sacrifices.<sup>1</sup>
3. The Iranians were very confused in those days, and the revolution made the situation worse for them. The desire to clear up this confusion was one of the motives which encouraged Kasravi to write the book.
4. In this great revolution, the poor people toiled to gain liberty, while the fruits of their struggle went to the important families and higher classes of society.
5. Although most of the Iranian and foreign press reported the events of the revolution, they were not honest enough to give all the facts and paint a true picture. Kasravi therefore thought it essential to produce a trustworthy study.
6. One of the characteristics of the Iranians is that they forget everything soon. Those who eat the sweet fruit of liberty today ought to realize how their forefathers suffered to win that liberty.<sup>2</sup> The writing

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1. Tarikh-e Mashruteh-ye Iran, p.3.

2. Ibid., p.5.

of a history of the Constitutional movement was therefore necessary from many points of view.

In the following pages Kasravi's account of important features of the Constitutional revolution and his ideas about its causes and evolution will be briefly summarized. Kasravi<sup>1</sup> is convinced that even after the time of Nâder Shâh (mid 18th century) Iran was still considered to be one of the greatest empires in Asia. Although Karim Khân Zand and his successors could not add to Iran's glory, they did not lower the country's reputation. Kasravi<sup>2</sup> thinks that the Qájár kings ruined the country's economy through their commercial policies, and generally kept Iran poor and ignorant. At that time other countries were progressing rapidly, and great events such as the French<sup>3</sup> revolution, the development of science, and profound social changes were taking place. The Qájár kings were ignorant and virtually unaware of the changes going on in the world. Early in Nâser ol-Din Shâh's reign (1848-1896), when Iran was threatened by two powerful enemies, the British in the south and the Russians in the north, the position of Chief Minister was given to a great and wise patriot, Mirza Taqi Khân Amir-e Kabir, who was a self-made man.<sup>4</sup> History recognizes him as a very remarkable statesman.

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1. Târikh-e Mashruteh, p.7.

2. Ibid., pp 7-8.

3. Ibid., p.7.

4. Ibid.

While he held the position of Chief Minister, he tried to get rid of the main obstacles to reform and attempted to remedy Iran's backwardness. He did not long hold office, having gained many enemies who made things difficult for him. Eventually he was dismissed, and (on January 9, 1852) put to death. In Kasravi's<sup>1</sup> opinion it is obvious that Násir ol-Din Sháh was not interested in improving the country, or really concerned about Iran's future. The Iranian people, however, gradually became aware of the advanced way of living in other countries, and the intellectual classes began to talk about the need for change in Iran. Násir ol-Din Sháh naturally got to know of their aims and wishes, and although he himself did not want any change, he was obliged to accept it up to a certain point. He summoned the Iranian ambassador in Istanbul, Mirzá Hoseyn Khán Sepahsálár, and made him Minister of Justice<sup>2</sup> and later (1872-1873) Chief Minister. This remarkable man was well informed about the progress of the European countries in all aspects of life, and an admirer of the reforms (Tanzimat) in the Ottoman Empire. He decided to organize the administration on the same lines as in other countries.<sup>3</sup> He was the founder of the modern ministries in Iran. Their number was nine, as follows:

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh-ye Iran, p.8.

2. He became Minister of Justice in 1871.

3. Tárikh-e Mashruteh-ye Iran, p.8.

- 1 - <sup>1</sup> Ministry of Internal Affairs (Omur-e Dákheleh).
- 2 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Omur-e Khárejah).
- 3 - Ministry of War (Jang).
- 4 - Ministry of Finance (Málieh).
- 5 - Ministry of Justice ('Adlieh).
- 6 - Ministry of Education ('Olum).
- 7 - Ministry of Industry and Trade (Sená'at va Tejárát).
- 8 - Ministry of Public Works (Faváyed-e 'Ámmeh).
- 9 - Ministry of Court (Darbár).

Sepahsálár also persuaded the Shah to visit Europe in 1873 and see for himself the advanced European way of living. Náser ol-Din Sháh made a second journey to Europe in the later part of 1878, and a third in 1889. From<sup>2</sup> 1885 to 1897 Mirzá 'Ali Asghar Khán Amin ol-Soltán was the Chief Minister, and in 1889 he accompanied the Shah on his third journey. These visits, instead of opening the Shah's eyes and making him aware of the need for reform, catered more for the Shah's personal amusement; but, as has been mentioned before, the people were taking more interest in the country's affairs and were also trying to find out what was going on.

During this time there appeared a few broad-minded men of great ability, who aimed to open the people's eyes and

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.8.

2. Ibid., p.10.

show them the primitive state of Iranian society. Among them<sup>1</sup> was Mirzá Malkom Khán, an Armenian from Esfahán who later became a Moslem; he was an outstanding writer and reformist, and was particularly opposed to the numerous concessions which the government gave to foreign companies. Another remarkable figure was<sup>2</sup> Sayyed Jamál ol-Din Asadábádi, whose sermons in the mosque aroused the Iranian masses and prepared them for revolution. Foreign companies gained many concessions during the reign of Náser ol-Din Sháh. For example, a British company obtained in 1887 the promise of a concession to build a railway between Bushehr and Gilán, but was not able to proceed with this project. Another important concession was the tobacco "Régie" or monopoly.<sup>3</sup> In 1890 the government conferred on a British company the monopoly of selling tobacco throughout Iran and abroad. This caused an uproar amongst the people, especially at Tabriz and also at Esfahán and Tehran; but the Shah was not influenced by public opinion. Later Mirzá Mohammad Hasan Shirázi, a great religious leader (mojtahed) of those days, who resided at Sámarrá in Ottoman territory and was

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1. Kasravi thinks that Mirzá Malkom Khán belonged to the Freemasons, because all his writings give this impression.
  2. Also called Afghani; the well known reformist and Pan-Islamist preacher (1838/9-1897). He visited Iran twice, in 1886 and 1889-1891, and was expelled by order of the Shah on both occasions. In 1891 he was arrested in the shrine of Shah 'Abd ol-'Azim near Téhran, which was supposed to be an inviolable sanctuary. Tarikh-e Mashruteh, p.10.
  3. This was intended as a means of raising revenue from tobacco, like the tobacco "Regies" in Turkey, Italy and France. Tarikh-e Mashruteh, p.15. Kasravi in one of his many learned articles related the history of Pipes and Hookahs.

in touch with Jamál ol-Din Asádábádi, decreed that Moslems must give up smoking while the concession remained in force. The company complained to the Shah, but the Shah had no choice and could not disregard the people's feelings. He was obliged to cancel the concession and borrow the sum of £500,000 from newly established British Bank in Iran, the Bānk-e Sháhanshāhi (Imperial Bank of Persia), and give this sum as compensation to the British tobacco company. This was Iran's first loan from a foreign lender. On the other hand,<sup>1</sup> Kasravi considers that the cancellation of the concession was a great achievement for the Iranian people. For the first time the people began to realize that they were capable of resisting the government and reforming the country, if only they were united.

In the first fifty years of Nāser ol-Din Sháh's reign, Iran had many connections with Europe, and the numbers of European-style ministries and schools increased. The most important new school was the Dār ol-Fonun, founded by Amir-e Kabir in 1851 and opened in 1852 shortly after his death. This was an institution for the promotion of contemporary higher learning. The first steps for a modern primary educational system were taken by Hájj Mirzá Hasan Roshdieh,<sup>2</sup> a Tabrizi who had lived in Istanbul. After the assassination

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1. Tarikh-e Mashruteh, p.17.

2. This was in 1889; Tarikh-e Mashruteh, p.21.

of Násir ol-Din Sháh by a disciple of Jamál ol-Din Asadábádi in 1896, his son Mozaffar ol-Din Sháh<sup>1</sup> came to the throne. The government was suffering from lack of financial resources, and the Shah also wanted to go to Europe for medical treatment. In 1900 the government borrowed the sum of 22,500,000 roubles<sup>2</sup> at five per cent interest from the Russian government, and as security for the interest and repayment of the loan allowed Russia to take the customs revenues in the north for 75 years. The government, however, could not solve its financial problems with this money, because nothing was done to reform the administration or improve the people's lot. Eventually the money was squandered in such a way that no one benefited. In 1902 the government borrowed a further 10 million roubles from Russia, and in return promised to revise the customs tariff in a way favourable to Russia and gave the Russians a concession to build a road from Jolfá through Tabriz and Qazvin to Tehran; but again the money was spent wastefully. At that time the work of the government was carried on mainly by two groups, the court and the religious leaders. Both were dissatisfied with the Shah for reasons of self-interest rather than for the sake of the people. A Belgian<sup>3</sup> supervisor named Naus was put in charge of the customs, which he

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1. Kasravi considers that Mozaffar ol-Din Shah was less authoritative than his father, but that he sympathized with the people in many ways.

2. Tarikh-e Mashruteh, p.24.

3. Kasravi says that Naus and his staff behaved most dishonestly towards the Iranians.

reorganized along European lines. He and his staff made the businessmen pay full duty on their goods. They also appeared to discriminate between Christian and Moslem businessmen, and this aroused great resentment. At the same time the Russians took the opportunity to have the customs tariff revised in a way which was very unfair to Iran; indeed it was quite as harmful as the Russo-Iranian treaty of Torkmān Cháy of 1828.<sup>1</sup> The Russians paid very little duty when they brought their goods to Iran, while goods exported from Iran were subjected to heavy export duties, and goods imported from India and elsewhere were subjected to higher duties than Russian goods. The new tariff<sup>2</sup> not only damaged Iran's economy, but aroused resentment in other countries such as Britain and India.

During this time, the Iranian masses were gradually being awakened. The establishment of modern schools by the already mentioned Hájj Mirzá Hasan Roshdīeh, and by a patriotic mojtahed, Sayyed 'Abdollah Behbahāni, and another religious scholar, Shaykh Hádi Najmábadi, did more than anything else to shake the pillars of the Shah's autocracy. An important sign of the people's progress was the appearance of newspapers.

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1. Tarikh-e Mashruteh, p.37. This treaty, signed after Iran's defeat by Russia, not only ceded territory to the Russians, but also gave them privileges called "Capitulations" which were later given to the other European states also.
  2. Full details are given by Rezá Safiniá in his book Esteqlál-e Gomroki-ye Iran, Tehran, 1308/1929.

Before this there had been no newspapers except for one or two strictly governmental gazettes. News and comments on Iran's political situation could only be obtained from the foreign press and from Persian newspapers published abroad such as Akhtar<sup>1</sup> in Estanbul, Hekmat<sup>2</sup> in Egypt, Qanun<sup>3</sup> in London, and later Habl ol-Matin<sup>4</sup> in Calcutta, and Sorayya<sup>5</sup> and Parvaresh<sup>6</sup> in Egypt.

The first independent newspapers in Iran were Tarbiat<sup>7</sup> in Tehran and Adalat<sup>8</sup> in Tabriz. Books with a reforming message also exercised great influence, especially those of Hájj 'Abdol-Rahim Tálebov (1844-1910) and Hájj Zayn ol-'Ábedin Marághé'i. Tálebov was born at Tabriz, and when young migrated to Caucasia, where through his own ability he made some money as a merchant. When he became older, he began to write books; he was an intelligent man and had read a lot (in Russian) about modern sciences such as physics, chemistry and astronomy. His two most remarkable books are the Masálek

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1. Akhtar, published in Istanbul by Mohammad Táher Tabrizi (1875-1897). See Browne's Literary History, 4, p.468.
  2. Published in Egypt in the Persian language by Mirzá Mahdi Khán Za'im ol-Dowleh.
  3. Published in London by Mirzá Malkom Khán Názem ol-Dowleh (1890-1893).
  4. Published in Calcutta for forty-seven years from (1893-1931) by Mo'ayyed ol-Eslam.
  5. Published in Cairo and later in Tehrán and Káshán by Mirzá 'Ali Mohammad Khán Kashani, 1898-1900.
  6. Published in Cairo by Mirzá 'Ali Mohammad Parvaresh from 1900-1941.
  7. Published from 1896 by Zoká ol-Molk Mohammad Hosayn Forughi.
  8. A weekly newspaper published at Tabriz by Mirzá Mohammad Khán Hakim Bashi.

ol-Mohsenin and Ketáb-e Ahmad. In the former, five mountain climbers discuss ethics, science and politics on their way to the top of Mount Damávand, and in their dreams meet great figures from Iran's past. In the Ketáb-e Ahmad<sup>1</sup> the author discusses various subjects with his imaginary son Ahmad, and teaches him about modern sciences and European civilization, which he contrasts with Iran's backwardness. Hájj Zayn ol-Ábedin Marághé'i was the son of a very religious merchant of Marágheh in Ázarbáiján. He lived much of his life as a merchant in Russia and stayed also in Calcutta, Istanbul and Cairo, where he contributed to the Persian newspapers published in those cities. His great book is the Siáhat-námeh-ye Ebráhim Beg.<sup>2</sup> This is the story of an Iranian merchant's son who goes to Egypt to obtain knowledge, and when he comes back to Iran is shocked by the primitive way of living in his own country. A few poets also began writing poetry to encourage the people and teach them patriotism. Among<sup>3</sup> them Kasravi mentions Hájj Mohammad Esma'il Monir Mázandaráni, Mirzá Mahdi Khán Hekmat and Mirzá Hasan Khán Badi'.

One of the things which most worried patriotic Iranians in Mozaffar ol-Din Shah's reign was the great and increasing

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.45.

2. Kasravi considers this a remarkable book, if one excludes the poems from it.

3. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.47.

power given to the Belgian Monsieur Naus. In addition to his post as Controller of the Customs, he was<sup>1</sup> appointed Director of the Registration Office, and Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. The people, and particularly the mollás, felt more and more strongly that he ought to be removed from the scene, and were searching for a pretext. They found one sooner than they expected. Photographs were taken of Naus and some of his colleagues at a fancy dress ball clad in mollás' robes. This aroused a great scandal among the mass of the people and especially among the religious leaders. The Shah, however, was quite unmoved. In the meantime two influential and very learned mojtaheds, Sayyed Mohammad Tabatabái and the already mentioned Sayyed 'Abdollah Behbaháni, had joined the protesters,<sup>2</sup> and this gave them a lot of encouragement. All classes of the people were now demanding reform. The Shah was preparing to pay a third visit to Europe, when suddenly a number of merchants who had been ill-treated by customs officials took sanctuary at the shrine of Hazrat 'Abd ol-'Azim in 1904, in protest against the conduct of the Customs Department. They asked the Shah to dismiss Monsieur Naus. As the Shah was about to depart on a journey to Europe, his son Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá temporarily assumed the royal powers; he promised to redress the

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.48.

2. They joined the protesters in 1905. Kasravi considers this the start of the Constitutional movement.

grievances of the merchants, and for a short while they kept quiet; but the storm was expected to break at any time. Certain small events also encouraged the people to think that they could realize their wishes. For instance, the Russians<sup>1</sup> had bought an old cemetery, which included a school, and they wanted to clear the site and build an office for their bank on it. Sayyed Mohammad Tabátábái opposed the idea, saying that it was not right to destroy a school or cemetery. The people, who were then very much influenced by religious leaders, strongly supported him, and as a result the Russians gave up the idea of building a bank on this site. Kasravi<sup>2</sup> observes that in a way the common people were lucky, because their rulers were completely ignorant. They thought that because after every uproar the people soon calmed down, they could be sure that nothing serious would happen; whereas in fact the calmness of the people was only temporary, like a spark of fire hidden under ashes, which will flare up again.

In 1905<sup>3</sup> the Russo-Japanese war caused a sharp rise in the price of sugar, which Iran used to import mainly from Russia. The governor of Tehrán 'Alá ol-Dowleh, who was a headstrong man, tried unsuccessfully to force the merchants

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.55.

2. Ibid., p.57.

3. Ibid., p.58.

to reduce the price of sugar, and then in December 1905 arrested a number of them and bastinadoed two of them. This aroused intense anger amongst the other merchants. They closed their shops, and resolved to vindicate the two injured merchants Hájj Sayyed Hashem and Hájj Sayyed Esma'il Khán.<sup>1</sup> Some of them took sanctuary in the Masjed-e Jom'eh of Tehrán.

The Emám Jom'eh of Tehrán<sup>2</sup> was working for 'Ayn ol-Dowleh, who was then Chief Minister. One day when a certain mollá was addressing the people in the Masjed-e Jom'eh, the Emám Jom'eh arrived in the company of some soldiers and accused him of disloyalty to the Shah, thereby causing a great scandal in the mosque.<sup>3</sup> The merchants then took sanctuary at Hazrat 'Abdol-'Azim,<sup>4</sup> accompanied by a number of mollás, who thereby showed their sympathy with the merchants. Although there was still no sign of any demand for a constitution, the people began for the first time to speak openly about the government's defects. One of the goals of the mollás was the establishment of an 'Adálatkháneh (House of Justice) to reform the judicial administration, because the existing law courts were for the most part not

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1. Tarikh-e Mashruteh, p.59.

2. The Emám Jom'eh is the Emám (prayer leader) of the principal mosque (Masjed-e Jom'eh) in every Iranian city.

3. Kasravi accuses the editor of Habl ol-Matin of belittling the mollás in this matter and of favouring 'Ayn ol-Dowleh.

4. The students of two schools called Dar ol-Shafa and Sadr co-operated with the merchants.

fair and honest in their judgements. The government promised to set up an 'Adálatkhāneh; and this was supposed to be the first step towards reforming the law and the law-courts throughout the country. In<sup>1</sup> return for this promise, the merchants and mollás who had taken sanctuary left Hazrat 'Abdol-'Azim in January 1906. The common people welcomed them back with much enthusiasm. Reports of this event appeared in the press at home and also abroad. All the newspapers praised the mollás and their great achievement.

Another incident which occurred at this time also stirred the people's feelings.<sup>2</sup> A man named Hájj Mohammad Hasan promised to provide the amount of wheat and meat needed to supply Tehran, and actually made a contract with the government to do this. He put up the prices, and the people protested, but without result. Two resolute mollás then began preaching to the people about this matter. Kasravi remarks that the nation and the government stood like two different factions on opposite sides.<sup>3</sup> The situation grew worse and worse, until eventually a preacher, Hájj Mohammad, criticized 'Ayn ol-Dowleh and was arrested. Led by Sayyed 'Abdollah Behbahāni, the people made vigorous protests and again closed the bazaar. 'Ayn ol-Dowleh feared

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1. Tarikh-e Mashruteh, pp.83-84.

2. Ibid., p.74.

3. Ibid., p.95.

a popular uprising and sent groups of soldiers into various sections of Tehran to control the situation. Tabátábáí, Behbaháni, and another leading mojtahed Sadr ol-'Olamá, together with a large number of people, then took sanctuary in June 1906 in the shrine of Ma'sumeh at Qom.<sup>1</sup> The Shah lacked enough courage to solve the problem himself, and did nothing; in fact he was a tool in 'Ayn ol-Dowleh's hand. People now began to speak about the need for Constitutional government (Hokumat-e Mashruteh). A group of theologians and merchants went to the British Legation and asked the British Minister to urge the government to grant their demands for recognition of the people's rights. Their first ambition was for the establishment of an 'Adálatkháneh, as has been mentioned. They drew up their claims in writing, and the British Minister<sup>2</sup> delivered the document to the government. 'Ayn ol-Dowleh paid no attention to the popular demands, and consequently on July 19, 1906 a large number of merchants and artisans took refuge in the Legation; eventually the number rose to over 12,000. At the same time the Crown Prince<sup>3</sup> Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá sent a telegram to his father from Tabriz urging him to approve the people's demands. This was considered a great help in enabling the people to

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.106.

2. Sir Cecil Spring Rice.

3. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.113.

4. Ibid.

gain their rights. The Shah in August 1906 promised to grant a constitution and order the election of a parliament (Majles), and he also dismissed 'Ayn ol-Dowleh. Kasravi<sup>1</sup> relates that Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá had never been on good terms with 'Ayn ol-Dowleh, who wanted to deprive him of his title of Crown Prince; and as a result Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá communicated with the popular movement in the hope of getting rid of 'Ayn ol-Dowleh. His place as chief minister was taken by Moshir ol-Dowleh, a liberal statesman. The British Minister, according to Kasravi,<sup>2</sup> urged the Shah to agree to the people's demands. Consequently on August 5, 1906, the Shah signed the royal decree providing for Constitutional government. The people's success was reported in the home and foreign newspapers, including those in India, Europe and Egypt.

In accordance with the decree of August 5, 1906, and subsequently agreed election arrangements, the people of Tehran duly elected their sixty Deputies. The new situation was not satisfactory from the Shah's point of view, or the government's.<sup>3</sup> The Crown Prince as governor of Ázarbáiján continued to govern at Tabriz in an autocratic and rather tyrannical manner, and in Ázarbáiján the people's demands were

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.113.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.136.

not being satisfied. The grant of Constitutional government only became known to the people there through an announcement by Mr. Wratislaw,<sup>1</sup> the British Consul at Tabriz. In some other parts of the country the news later began to cause alarm. Most of the deputies had not been elected or had not arrived in Tehrân when Mozaffar ol-Din Shâh opened the first Majles on October 7, 1906.<sup>2</sup> The Majles performed a memorable service by refusing permission to the government to borrow more money from the Russian owned Bânk-e Esteghrâzi (Banque des Prêts) and the British owned Bânk-e Shâhanshâhi (Imperial Bank).<sup>3</sup> At the same time the Majles drew up the Iranian Constitution (Fundamental Law), which Mozaffar ol-Din Shâh formally signed on December 30, 1906. Meanwhile the Deputies from Tabriz had arrived on February the 17th, 1907.

When Mohammad 'Ali Mirzâ became Shah after the death of Mozaffar ol-Din on January 4, 1907, he showed from the beginning that he was determined to ruin the Constitutional regime.<sup>4</sup> Moreover Monsieur Naus and his compatriots were still working in the Customs, in spite of resolutions by the Majles calling for their dismissal. The constitutionalist association (anjoman) of Tabriz, through the Tabriz Deputies in the Majles, put forward the following demands:

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1. Tarikh-e Mashruteh, p.162.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.168.

4. Ibid., p.203.

1. <sup>1</sup>The Shah (Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá) must personally sign the Constitution.
2. The number of Ministers must not exceed eight, but if more were necessary, permission must be given by the Majles.
3. No foreigner should be appointed as a Minister.
4. In every city a local association (anjoman-e mahalli) should be set up to deal with the people's difficulties.
5. The appointment of Honorary Ministers (without portfolio) should not be allowed, and specific responsibilities should be assigned to the eight Ministers only.
6. The Shah must dismiss Naus; and also Prim, the head of the Customs at Tabriz, and Sa'ed<sup>2</sup> ol-Molk must be dismissed.

Eventually Naus was dismissed, and the cabinet Ministers assumed specific responsibilities, in accordance with the above demands.

At Tehran, Rasht, and especially Tabriz, supporters of the Constitution became interested in military training. On the other hand, the two Sayyeds, Mohammad Tabatabáí and 'Abdalláh Behbaháni had no desire to arm the people, because they thought that this would make the situation worse. Kasravi recognises that in spite of the Constitutional move-

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1. Tarikh-e Mashruteh, p.215.

2. Sa'ed ol-Molk had been the governor of Ardabil but was dismissed because of his unfaithfulness to the constitutional government; later he became the Minister of the Treasury.

ment the mass of the people still lived in absolute ignorance, and were not ready to accept changes or reforms.<sup>1</sup> He adds that most of the great religious leaders at Tabriz were now opposed to the new régime, as indeed were most of the leading local personalities; one eminent mojtahed of Tabriz, however, always supported it, namely Seqat ol-Eslám.<sup>2</sup>

Kasravi<sup>3</sup> points out that there were two main groups who were in favour of the Constitution. The first consisted of those who were very much impressed by European civilization and intended to transform and modernize all aspects of Iranian life; for example they wanted to introduce electricity, railways and factories, and generally to industrialize the country. The second group were under the influence of religion. They wanted above all to spread religious ideas more widely among the people and to improve the orthodoxy of their beliefs. They also wanted customary law ('orf) to be replaced by Islamic law (Shari'at). Kasravi<sup>4</sup> remarks that in fact the constitutional revolution was originally religious, but later changed and became coloured by patriotic ideas. Mirzá 'Ali Asghar Khán Atábeg-e A'zam, who again became Prime Minister in May 1907, and the Shah Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá, were in their hearts hostile to the Constitution and intended

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.259.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.295.

4. Ibid., p.261.

to finish with it at the first opportunity. The Majles appointed a committee which drew up the Supplementary Fundamental Law (Motammem); this was approved by the whole Majles and eventually was signed by Mohammad 'Ali Sháh on October 8, 1907.<sup>1</sup> When the Constitution had thus been completed, many<sup>2</sup> religious leaders started to express disapproval, alleging that it was contrary to Islamic law. This gave a great opportunity for the enemies of Constitutional government. The Prime Minister Atábeg-e A'zam tried to discourage revolutionary tendencies, and most mollás disassociated themselves from the Constitutionalists, whom they even accused of disbelieving and denying God.

The government had to deal with other difficulties. The Ottoman Turks began to stir up disorder among the Iranian Kurds. Atábeg-e A'zam was not sufficiently capable to deal with all these problems. People were demanding that he should give up his post, especially the people of Tabriz; they knew that he no longer held any real authority, but had been appointed to carry out the task of overthrowing the Constitution. Moreover, Kasravi<sup>3</sup> states, the Shah, Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá, had a secret agreement with Russia, according to which he had no freedom to dismiss Atábeg. Eventually Atábeg

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.465.

2. Ibid., p.375.

3. Ibid., p.445.

was assassinated on August<sup>1</sup> 31, 1907, when he was going to the Majles to negotiate with the deputies. The assassin was a man from Ázarbáiján named 'Abbás Áqá. Immediately after Atábeg's assassination, a number of anti-constitutionalist Mollás who had gone to Hazrat 'Abdol-'Azim returned to Tehrán. Kasravi<sup>2</sup> says that it was obvious that they were Atábeg's hirelings.

Just at this time the Russian and British governments signed an agreement by which they agreed to divide Iran into Russian and British "spheres of influence." This agreement was very much against Iran's interests, and thereafter both Russia and England did as they wished in Iran. In Kasravi's opinion, they were both determined to get rid of Constitutional government in Iran, and this helped to increase Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá's obstinacy. Kasravi<sup>3</sup> thinks that all the subsequent bloodshed, the bombardment of the Majles, the re-establishment of autocracy, and the occupation of Iranian territory by Russian troops, were all the result of the disgraceful Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907, and that in the long run the Iranians only regained Constitutional government because of Russia's great revolution in 1917. Otherwise, Kasravi says,<sup>4</sup> they could not possibly

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.447.

2. Ibid., p.458.

3. Ibid., p.577.

4. Ibid., p.458.

have re-established it. This agreement, which was reported in nearly all the newspapers, provoked a tremendous uproar.

After Atábeg's death, the Prime Minister and cabinet Ministers talked about reconciling the Shah and the Majles; but it was obvious that the Shah and government were only pretending and were not really loyal to the Constitution. The government established an organization called Fotuvat which began agitating against constitutionalism. The Majles was deeply involved with its own duties. The Shah<sup>1</sup> came to <sup>the</sup> Majles for the official ceremonies and made promises and several times swore solemn oaths to be loyal to the Constitution, all of which he broke not long afterwards. At Tabriz enmity between the constitutionalists and the Shah's supporters was growing deeper. By that time<sup>2</sup> the majority of the people were armed, and all the streets were patrolled by soldiers. The Shah declared that the Majles should not interfere with the rights of his subjects, and also that the existence of too many associations (anjomans) and groups would cause trouble. The Majles replied that it would consider the Shah's position, but that according to the Constitution associations and groups were free in their actions. Nevertheless at Tabriz the champions of liberty began preparing to march to Tehran and join those in the

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.332.

2. Ibid., p.458.

capital. Gradually people began to speak against the Shah, and a newspaper called Mosavat<sup>1</sup> published articles criticizing him. At Tabriz a fight lasting two days took place between the champions of liberty (Mojahedin) and the Shah's partisans. This fight was very important from the point of view of the constitutional struggle; for ~~altogether~~ <sup>although</sup> it caused a lot of distress, it prepared the people for the conflict which lay ahead.

As Kasravi sees it,<sup>2</sup> Iran's constitutional revolution passed through three phases:

1. In the first phase there was unanimity among the whole nation.
2. In the second phase religious authorities exercised most influence on the masses, the chief motive of their activity being the advancement of religious institutions.
3. In the third phase the people lost all their earlier enthusiasm, except in a few big cities such as Tabriz and Tehran where they continued to strive for constitutional government.

As soon as the mollás realized that constitutional government would be of no use to them and might perhaps even decrease their power, they gave up the struggle and joined the counter-revolutionaries. The Shah took the opportunity to prepare a plot to overthrow the Constitution. He ordered

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1. Published at Tabriz and edited by Sayyed Mohammad Reza Shirazi.

2. Tarikh-e Mashruteh, p.568.

Colonel Lyakhov, the Russian commander of the Iranian Cossacks, to bombard the Majles.<sup>1</sup> This deed (which could not have been done without the approval of the Russians) was carried out on June 23, 1908, and Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá then repudiated the Constitution which he had sworn to maintain. There was not much resistance except at Tabriz, where the people never gave up the struggle, especially after learning that the great religious leaders (mojtaheds) at Najaf in Ottoman territory had condemned Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá's action in Tehran. Supporters of the Constitution secretly founded two associations called the "War Association" (Anjoman-e Jang) and the "Military Association" (Anjoman-e Nezám) under the leadership of Sardár Mo'azzam Khorásáni and other leaders well acquainted with European civilization. The bombardment ordered by the Shah and carried out by Lyakhov and his troops devastated the Majles building (Bahárestán palace), and was followed by the arrest of many Deputies, some of whom were put to death. The people gave up the struggle after a while, and the royal autocracy was restored. The British Legation in Tehran opened its doors to some of the fugitive constitutionalists. In<sup>2</sup> most cities the people, when they learned what was happening, gave up the struggle, except at Tabriz and Rasht.

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1. Tarikh-e Mashruteh, p.577.

2. Kasravi says that the majority of the cities pretended to help the constitutionalists but actually were not strong enough to put up any resistance.

At Tabriz<sup>1</sup> the Russian consul Pakhtianov tried to act as an intermediary and persuade the people to negotiate with the Shah and stop the fighting. His action at first began to undermine their will-power; but the champions of the Constitution (Mojáhedín) were not deceived by him. Tabriz became like a battlefield. The Shah's plan was to seek the help of the mollás in overcoming the freedom-fighters. Certain mollás accused the defenders of the Constitution of being Bahá'is and said that the shedding of their blood was therefore lawful. Nevertheless Sattár Khán and Báqer Khán, the two leaders of the Tabrizi Mojáhedín, did not waver in their opposition to the perfidious Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá and his supporters. Outside Iran, particularly in Caucasia, groups of people were offering their help to the Iranian Constitutionalists. In the extreme confusion, the mojtaheds of Najaf in Iraq issued a very important ruling (fatvá). They declared that those who acted against the Constitution were fighting against the Emám of the Age (i.e. the Twelfth Emám). This declaration aroused intense excitement amongst the people. When the Shah sent an ultimatum through 'Ayn ol-Dowleh, then Governor of Ázarbáiján, to the people at Tabriz demanding their submission, they did not obey.

The struggle between the Shah's supporters and the

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh, p.678.

constitutionalists lasted for eleven months. This is one of the most tragic incidents of Iran's history; but on the other hand it forms a very heroic chapter. Kasravi describes it all fully, in particular the defence of Tabriz by the Mojāhedīn. In the end the champions of the Constitution won the freedom which the people deserved, thereby opening a new chapter in Iran's history. Kasravi<sup>1</sup> observes that with their victory there appeared a tremendous change in the people's way of thinking. For the first time Iranians had found that they could gain power and enforce their will if they kept their unity. The struggle taught them that they must not accept any kind of foreign domination or influence, but must aim for complete independence.

#### The last phase of the Constitutional Revolution.

In spite of the successful resistance of the Tabrizis, the government made no move to recall the Majles. Tabriz was occupied in April 1909<sup>2</sup> by Russian troops, who came to protect foreigners but took the liberty of persecuting the people. Russia and Britain, according to Kasravi, did not think that there was any possibility of future incidents. However, men of the Bakhtiāri tribe under the leadership of Sardār As'ad and Hājj Najaf Qoli Samsām ol-Saltaneh marched from Esfahān to Tehran, where they joined with the Mojāhedīn

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1. Tārikh-e Mashruteh, p.906.

2. Ibid., p.902.

of Gilán who had marched from Rasht under the leadership of Yefram Khán. After three days of fighting, in which Yefram Khán showed great bravery, they defeated the Shah's troops, and on July 16, 1909, Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá fled to the Russian Legation. Through this national victory Iranians for the second time gained Constitutional government. Surprisingly Colonel Lyakhov,<sup>1</sup> who after bombarding the Majles had been appointed military governor of Tehran, became very apologetic towards the constitutionalists; later he left Tehran. The<sup>2</sup> constitutionalist leaders deposed Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá and placed his thirteen year old son Ahmad on the throne. At that time the Russians refrained from interfering, though they later resumed their offensive policy. It was afterwards discovered that the Russians were helping Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá's supporters in Ardabil, which was supposed to be the last stronghold of royalism in Iran; but they failed even there, because Democrats (i.e. constitutionalists), mainly from Tabriz, joined forces with Bakhtiári troops sent from Tehran under the command of Sardár Bahádor and Yefram Khán and crushingly defeated the royalists, whose leader Rahim Khán escaped to Russia.

The national victory (Fath-e Melli) of July 1909, won by the Iranian people after great efforts and sacrifices,

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1. Tarikh-e Hejdah-saleh-ye Ázarbaiján, p.67.

2. Ibid., p.60.

restored Constitutional government, but caused social confusion and widespread insecurity which harmed Iran's economy. In 1910 the government decided to ask for loans from foreign banks in order to remedy this situation,<sup>1</sup> and also in order to improve the military position by strengthening the army. For this purpose negotiations were started with the British and Russian representatives. At that particular time,<sup>2</sup> Europe was in a dangerous state, and consequently the two countries were trying to secure their positions in Asia. Kasravi<sup>3</sup> relates that they decided not to grant Iran's request except under special conditions. The Iranian government would be required to give them statements of all expenses, and to employ seven Frenchmen as financial supervisors to improve the economic position. The command of the army was to be entrusted to a foreigner. Iran was not to make any agreements with other foreign countries, and was to permit the building of a railway, and to allow shipping on Lake Orumiyeh to be entirely under Russian control. Eventually, when the people learned of these conditions, there was a great outburst of indignation, particularly in Ázarbáiján. The Majles also expressed disapproval. The Russians and British were angry, and most persistent in their demands. Finally the government decided to impose

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1. Tárikh-e hej dah-sáleh, p.119.

2. Ibid., p.120.

3. Ibid.

heavier taxes rather than borrow the money which it required under such humiliating conditions.

The Iranian government then engaged American experts to deal with the financial and economic situation. They worked under the supervision of W. Morgan Shuster,<sup>1</sup> a former official of the United States Treasury, who arrived in May 1911. They set about their tasks very earnestly on Shuster's recommendation. The government recruited a new armed force, the Gendarmerie, and engaged three Swedish officers to train it. Before long, the Americans began to meet with hostility and insult from the Russians, and also from the Belgian Customs officials who were collaborating with the Russians. Shuster's most important action was the establishment of the Gendarmerie. He planned a force of 10,000-12,000 men. Unfortunately his enemies interfered and spoiled all his achievements. Shuster wished to give the command of the Gendarmerie to a Military Attaché of the British Legation named Major Stokes.

In 1911<sup>2</sup> Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá decided to come back to Iran, and the Russians gave him some help. Kasravi<sup>3</sup> says that the Russians had been urging him to recover the throne, because they knew that if he succeeded they would be able to gain more advantages for themselves. The Iranian government

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1. Shuster has recorded his observations while he worked in Iran in his book The Strangling of Persia, New York, 1912.

2. Tárikh-e hej dah saleh, p.160.

3. Ibid., p.167.

had declared that it would deprive Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá of his pension if he should return, and it acted accordingly. In the confusion, the provincial anjoman of Tabriz sent a telegram to the anjomans in all Iranian cities encouraging the people to stand firm and keep their unity. The Russians let Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá go back to Iran in July 1911,<sup>1</sup> across the border of Gorgán and the Torkamán steppe, and internal fighting again broke out. Fortunately the defenders of the Constitution were victorious. Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá failed in his attempt and had to return to Russia. Later another problem appeared in the west of Irán, where Sálár ol-Dowleh, a brother of Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá, gathered together a force of armed Kurds and Lurs and began marching towards Tehran and Qom. His first and main intention was to help Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá, but when he realized that this would be a fruitless undertaking, he proclaimed himself Shah, and prepared to continue resisting the government. He was defeated by the government's forces, but escaped to Borujerd.

The government decided with the approval of the Majles to confiscate the property of Sálár ol-Dowleh and another brother, Sho'á' ol-Saltaneh.<sup>2</sup> The British and Russian Ministers did not express any disapproval, but when Shuster sent some gendarmes to confiscate a property which had

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1. Tárikh-e hejdah-sáleh, p.172.

2. He had been governor of Kordestán before the Constitutional revolution, and had already claimed the throne in 1907.

belonged to Sho'á' ol-Saltaneh,<sup>1</sup> the Russians claimed that it was Russian property. They had been against Shuster from the beginning and were searching for an excuse to wreck his plans. They insisted that the government should remove Shuster's men from Sho'á' ol-Saltaneh's garden, and alleged that two Russian officials had been injured by the gendarmes. The government, in spite of British urging, did not accept these demands. The Russians then sent an army division from Caucasia to Tabriz and Rasht, and on November 11, 1911, gave Iran an ultimatum.<sup>2</sup> They demanded that Shuster be dismissed, and that in future whenever Iran wanted to employ any foreign supervisor, she should first consult with Russia and Britain. Furthermore Iran must compensate Russia for the cost involved in sending troops to Iran. These demands aroused excitement and anger in the people, and crowds rushed to the Majles. Moreover the government received many telegrams from India and Iraq encouraging the people to stand firm before their enemies in defence of their rights. In Iraq, two mojtaheds, Mollá Mohammad Kázem Khorásáni and Hájj Shaykh Mázandaráni, issued a fatvá banning Russian goods. The Iranians were fond of drinking tea, which used to be imported from China through Russia; but in accordance with the ban they gave up drinking tea. In the Majles, the deputies unanimously rejected

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1. Tárikh-e hejdh-sáleh, p.229.

2. Ibid., p.235.

Russia's ultimatum. On the other hand,<sup>1</sup> it was not easy for Iran in those days to resist a powerful enemy like Russia. Ultimately, on November 24, 1911, the Russian demands had to be accepted. Yefram Khán had gone to the Majles and warned the deputies of the probable results of hostilities. The cabinet resigned, and the Majles was dissolved. Meanwhile champions of freedom at Tabriz were fighting with Russian soldiers.<sup>2</sup> The Russian troops, being more powerful, were able to defeat the constitutionalists. They arrested a number of them including a leading mojtahed, Seqat ol-Eslám, whom they hanged in Bâgh-e Shemál (North Garden) of Tabriz. Kasravi<sup>3</sup> in his book speaks of Seqat ol-Eslám as a great figure and champion of liberty. Undoubtedly his name will be recorded in Iran's history for ever. Tabriz was a scene of horror, with bloodshed everywhere. Liberty disappeared, and tyranny reigned. A partisan of Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá, by name Samad Khán Marághe'i, who was working for the Russians, came to Tabriz to stamp out the last vestiges of freedom. He persuaded certain Mollás and enemies of the Constitutional government to send a telegram to the British and Russian Legations asking them to restore Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá to the throne. Fortunately the British were

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1. Tárikh-e hejdah-sáleh, p.244.

2. Professor E.G. Browne wrote a small booklet about this incident, called Reign of Terror in Tabriz.

3. Tárikh-e hejdah-sáleh, p.273.

opposed to this idea, in spite of the Russian desire for it. According to the newspaper Hekmat, which was published in Egypt, the number of constitutionalists killed by Samad Khán amounted to 243. Some of the Tabrizi constitutionalists escaped to Ottoman territory, where they were received very kindly. The Turks took all the refugees to the city of Ván and freed them there. Kasravi quotes a line of Persian poetry which an Ottoman Turk said when he saw the Iranian refugees:<sup>1</sup>

رو بزرگ آردن ایرانیان بی وجه نیست  
 روزگار آید را محتاج خاکستر کند

"This bringing of Iranians to Turkey is not without justification. Time makes the mirror need dust."

The Russian ultimatum completely changed the situation in Iran. The Majles remained shut. All centres of constitutionalist and nationalist activity were suppressed. This was exactly what the Russians wanted, and the circumstances were favourable for their designs. According to the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907, these two powers intended to respect Iran's independence, and the Iranian government thought that after the acceptance of the ultimatum the Russian troops would leave Iran; but it was mistaken. Kasravi<sup>2</sup> relates that Samad Khán at the instigation of the Russians

1. Tárikh-e hej dah-sáleh, p.444.

2. Ibid., p.412.

sent a telegram to Tehran warning the government that if the Majles was reopened, he would try to form an independent state of Ázarbáiján. As a result the government had to postpone the reopening of Majles.

When the first world war broke out, involving Germany, Austria, France, Britain, Russia, and later the Ottoman empire, the Iranian government declared its neutrality. In spite of this, Russian and Ottoman troops moved into Iranian territory. The third Majles opened in November 1914, but Ázarbáiján was not represented in it. Nothing resulted from the government's negotiations with Russia and Ottoman Turkey, which did not withdraw their troops from Iran as they had promised. In the summer of 1915 there were suggestions that Iran might join the Germans against Russia. The Democrats, who were the leaders of the nationalist and constitutionalist movement, and their deputies in the Majles, tried to arrange this with the German Legation. On November 15, 1915, Russia and Britain sent another ultimatum to Iran. The German, Austrian and Turkish Legations were then expelled. The Democrat leaders left Tehran and went first to Qom, then to Kermánsháh, and then to Turkey and Germany. The third Majles thus came to an end having lasted only one year.

In Ázarbáiján the situation then became rather quieter. The Russians built the railway between Jolfá and Tabriz. In

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March 1917, however, the Romanov dynasty of Russia was overthrown, and in November 1917 the Bolshevik revolution took place. Most of the Russian soldiers in Iran went back to Russia, looting people's food and property as they passed. The British, Kasravi says, hoped to take the place of the Russians in northern Iran. They encouraged the formation of a combined force of Armenian and Assyrian soldiers to fight against the Ottoman Turks, under the command of the Assyrian bishop Mār Shimun. This led to internal fighting between the Armenian and Assyrian Christians and the Moslems; Kasravi<sup>1</sup> states that in this fighting ten thousand people were killed. The Christians seized Orumieh, and there was a lot of bloodshed at Khoy and Salmās. Ottoman Turkish troops then returned to Ázarbáiján, and when they reached Orumieh the Christians fled. The Ottoman Turks tried to persuade the people of Salmās and Orumieh to join a pro-Turkish and anti-British movement which they called Ettehád ol-Eslám (Union of Islam).

After the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, various nationalist groups such as the Democrats became active again in Iran. The majority of them intended that Iran should enter the war on the side of Germany and Ottoman Turkey. Certain other groups wanted Iran to side with Britain.

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1. Tárikh-e hejdah-sáleh, p.725.

British troops occupied Kermánsháh, Hamadán and Qazvin in February 1918, taking the place of the Russians, and they later occupied Enzeli and intervened at Baku. Their commander, General Dunsterville, wrote a book about their adventures.<sup>1</sup> The British also proposed in March 1918 to organize a unified and regular army for Iran. The Iranian government, then headed by Mostowfi ol-Mamálek, was ready to accept their suggestion on condition that they should expel foreign troops and rescind the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907. Instead of taking notice of the Iranian government's demands, the British, so Kasravi<sup>2</sup> states in his book, treated them as ridiculous. In 1917, a rebellion had broken out in Gilán under the leadership of Mirzá Kuchek Khán, who had formed an association called Ettehad ol-Eslám. The rebels were called Jangalis because they came from the forests of Gilán. They showed great enmity towards the British. They had<sup>3</sup> with them a number of Austrian soldiers led by an officer named Von Pachen, and also some Turks and some revolutionaries. In July 1918 they were beaten in a fight with General Dunsterville's British troops, who then occupied Rasht and Enzeli (now Bandar Pahlavi).

When the first world war ended with the victory of

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1. The Adventures of Dunsterforce, London, 1920.

2. Tarikh-e hejdah-saleh, p.786.

3. Ibid. p.789.

Britain, France and the United States in November 1918, the Ottoman Turkish troops left Iranian Ázarbáiján. At that time Iran was in an awkward position. New cabinets were formed at Tehran every few months, but they did not have much authority. The only remarkable achievement of Samsám ol-Saltaneh's cabinet (May-July 1918) was the denunciation of all previous contracts which Iran had made with Tsarist Russia. The cabinet of Vosuq ol-Dowleh (July 1918-June 1920) sent a representative, Mosháver ol-Mamálek, to the peace conference which met in Paris (January - June 1919), but he was not admitted.<sup>1</sup> The British nevertheless promised to discuss the 1907 agreement with the Russians as soon as the situation in Russia should calm down, and also to hand over the police organization which they had set up in southern Iran (South Persia Rifles) to the Iranian government. In August 1919 Vosuq ol-Dowleh's cabinet signed a draft treaty with Britain of which the main provisions were as follows:<sup>2</sup>

1. Britain would respect Iran's complete independence.
2. Britain would provide expert advisers for Iran.
3. Britain would provide new war equipment for the Iranian Forces at Iran's expense.
4. Britain would make a loan to Iran.

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1. Tárikh-e hájdah-sáleh, p.786.

2. Ibid., pp 324-825.

5. Britain would provide necessary facilities for improvement of trade.
6. The two countries would confer about revising the customs tariff in Iran's interest and about the choice of foreign advisers. Furthermore Britain and Iran would review all their previous treaties and contracts. Britain would support Iran's claim for war damage compensation from other belligerents. Britain would support justifiable revisions of Iran's frontiers.

The Iranian people were not satisfied with this draft treaty, and although Vosuq ol-Dowleh paid no heed to the people, it was never ratified.

Meanwhile in Ázarbáiján Shaykh Mohammad Khiábáni, a mollá who had been a Democrat Deputy in the second Majles, had formed a new Democrat party with a newspaper Tajaddod at Tabriz.<sup>1</sup> When the government wanted to organize a regular police force at Tabriz, Khiábáni opposed this plan and persuaded a number of people to seize the government offices in Tabriz. The local Gendarmerie supported him, and the two Swedish officers Byorling and Fokledlo left the city. Khiábáni boldly began to govern on his own in Tabriz. He renamed Ázarbáiján "Ázádestán" ("Land of the Free"),<sup>2</sup> and sent messages to Tehran asking for recognition. The Prime Minister Vosuq

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1. Started at Tabriz in 1916.

2. Tárikh-e hejdah-sáleh, p.877.

ol-Dowleh was eager to remove Khiábáni, but not strong enough to do so. The only body of men at Tabriz which refused to obey Khiábáni was the Iranian Cossack detachment, which was still commanded by Russian (anti-Bolshevik) officers. The government had no means of removing Khiábáni except through this Cossack force. Khiábáni was killed in a fight with the Cossacks in September 1920. One of his followers joined Esmá'il Áqá Simko, a Kurdish tribal rebel in the country west of Orumiye with a view to taking revenge on Khiábáni's killers. Esmá'il Áqá caused a lot of bloodshed and many times defeated the government's forces.

Kasravi ends the second and last volume of his record of Iran's constitutional struggle by mentioning that the Minister of War Rezá Khán<sup>1</sup> took office on April 25, 1921, and then, having reorganized the Iranian armed forces, dealt with Simko and other rebels.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi does not relate or discuss the great events of that year which marked the beginning of a new era, namely the Russo-Iranian treaty of February 26, 1921, and the withdrawal of the British troops from Iran; but thanks to Rezá Khán, peace and order and constitutional life were restored in Iran after a long period of anarchy.

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1. Later Rezá Sháh.

2. Tárikh-e hejdah-sáleh, p.900.

Some Comments on Kasravi's History of  
the Iranian Constitutional Struggle

In a book called Qiam-e-Ázarbáiján dar Engélab-e Mash-rutiat-e Irán ("Ázarbáiján's Uprising in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution"), the author, Engineer Karim Táherzâdeh, <sup>Behruz</sup> praises Kasravi's work as a historian. He thinks that Kasravi's research into the details of the constitutional struggle really deserves admiration. Although after the publication of Kasravi's second volume "Eighteen years of the History of Ázarbáiján"<sup>1</sup> a great number of his opponents tried to discredit the efforts of the Ázarbáijáni leaders, honest researchers know that the Ázarbáijánis strove to restore Iran's liberty and finally achieved victory for Irán. On the other hand Dr. Mahdi Malekzâdeh, author of a six-volume "History of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution" completed in 1953,<sup>2</sup> while admiring Kasravi's work as the masterpiece in its field, criticizes it on a few points. Although Kasravi did his best to produce an objective history, he was living according to his own admission in Ázarbáiján during the revolution and was at that time quite young. He could not personally witness or participate in most of the revolution's events, and was consequently not aware or not very well informed about the position in cities other than

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1. Táherzâdeh says that Kasravi used the notes of a certain Mohammad 'Ali Nateq in his research for this book and that he was the only historian who had written about the Mqjahedin and their great achievement.
  2. Tarikh-e Engélab-e Mashrutiat-e Iran, <sup>even</sup> six vols., Tehran, 1328/1949-1332/1953.

Tabriz. Although he took great trouble over his research, especially in the field of history, he did not have enough information about activities elsewhere during the revolution, and failed to mention them. Nevertheless he did his best to write a clear account of the events in Ázarbáiján, and his book is well worth reading. Unfortunately even here he has made some mistakes. Dr. Malekzádeh thinks that Kasravi has over estimated the roles of some of the participants in the Ázarbáijáni struggle and underestimated the efforts of others. Kasravi was over-enthusiastic about the Mojáhedín and exaggerated their importance. Being himself a brave and very outspoken man, Kasravi naturally felt great admiration for Sattár Khán and Báqer Khán; but these two were not only defenders of the Constitution in Ázarbáiján. Dr. Malekzádeh also complains that he could not form a precise picture of the internal conflicts at Tabriz by referring to Kasravi's book. He considers that Kasravi has exaggerated the importance of Mr. Baskerville (an American with a B.A. degree from Princeton University who was a teacher in the Memorial School at Tabriz and was murdered in 1909), and that Kasravi is wrong in saying that Mr. Baskerville had a private army of three hundred men. Furthermore, Kasravi has not correctly explained the victory won by Mojáhedín at Qal'eh-ye Sárídağh. Dr. Malekzádeh thinks that the Anjoman-e Sa'adat (an Iranian

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political club originally founded at Istanbul) gave tremendous help to the Constitutionalists at Tabriz; Kasravi mentions it with respect, but does not give a list of its members. Dr. Malekzādeh's criticisms are well documented, and seem to be justified, though they are relatively minor. He thinks that the title of Kasravi's book should have been "History of the Constitutional Revolution in Āzarbāijān", because it is in fact a detailed narrative of the struggle in that province.

In a book on Āzarbāijān's leading men in this period,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mahdi Mojtahedi thinks that Kasravi's record of the Iranian Constitutional revolution cannot be completely reliable, because Kasravi in writing his book took his personal feelings into account as well as the historical facts. For instance, Mahdi Mojtahedi considers Kasravi's estimate of the importance of Sattār Khān and the Mojāhedīn to be exaggerated. He says that Kasravi admired illiterate people's efforts for the cause of liberty more than those of highly educated people, because he thought that simple people have simple notions unspoilt by wrong ideologies, and for that reason are more patriotic. Mojtahedi recognizes that Kasravi's researches gained for him a high reputation at home and also abroad where he attracted the attention of many orientalist. He likens Kasravi's Tārikh-e Mashruteh to Ferdowsi's Shāhnāme. On the other hand, he thinks that Kasravi belittled great figures of the movement such as Taqizādeh and Tarbiyat. Mojtahedi

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1. Mahdi Mojtahedi, Rejāl-e Āzarbāijān dar 'Asr-e Mashrutiat, Tehran, 1324/1945.

accuses Kasravi of having indirectly encouraged the Ázarbáijánis to consider themselves a different nation from the rest of the country; although Kasravi did not deliberately urge them to think in this way, his writings, according to Mojtabehi could give this impression. Mojtabehi says that anyone who wishes to understand the events which took place when Ázarbáiján fell into the hands of separatist regimes, i.e. the Democrat regime of Mohammad Khiábáni in 1920 and the Russian-backed "Democrat" regime of Ja'far Pishevari in 1945-1946 should certainly refer to Kasravi's Tárikh-e Mashruteh. In spite of these criticisms, Mojtabehi believes that since a really trustworthy history of events of the revolution has not yet been produced, Kasravi's book is most valuable. He acknowledges that Kasravi was a scholarly researcher in the field of history, but thinks that he cannot be classed in the same category as Taqizádeh, Minovi or Qazvini, because he was a very self-opinionated man and a person with such a mentality cannot be a completely objective and honest researcher.

Dr. Faridun Ádamiat,<sup>2</sup> in the introduction to his book on "The idea of freedom and the origins of the Constitutional uprising" pays generous tribute to Kasravi as a historian when he says that of all the records of the Constitutional

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1. Mojtabehi, - Rejál Azárbáiján Dar Asr Mashruteh, Tehran, 1327/1949, pp 129-131.

2. Feraydun Ádamiat, Fekr-e Ázádi va Moqaddameh-ye Nehzat-e Iran, Introduction, Tehran 1340/1961.

movement Kasravi's Tárikh-e Mashruteh-ye Irán is the most reliable and trustworthy. However, Dr. Ádamiyat also points out that Kasravi's book is not above criticism and cannot be regarded as being a complete record of the events. Since the revolution many new facts have been brought to light.

Another admirer of Kasravi is Dr. Háfez Farmánfarmáyán,<sup>1</sup> who regards Kasravi's book as the most comprehensive work yet written on the subject of the Constitutional revolution.

### Kasravi's articles on historical subjects.

In addition to these books, Kasravi wrote valuable articles on historical subjects<sup>2</sup> which were published in different newspapers and periodicals. Among them are The Afshars of Khuzestán, The History of Tabarestán and My Notes, Cities and Rulers, The Afshár Tribe, Shams ol-Din Taghrá'i, Taymur Malek, the Bayondoris, History and the Historian. Each of these is worthy of a brief discussion here.

#### 1. The Afshars of Khuzestán (Afshár-há-ye Khuzestán)<sup>3</sup>

Kasravi proves that the Afshars were for a long time one of the important tribes of Khuzestán. Originally they had come from Central Asia (Turkistan). At the beginning of the Safavid period, some of them migrated to Khuzestán. In the

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1. Dr. Háfez Farmánfarmáyán, Ketáb-shenási-ye Tárikh-e Jadid-e Irán, Tehrān, 1344/1965, p.19.

2. Collected by Yahya Zoka in Chehel Maqaleh-ye Kasravi, Tehrān, 1336/1957.

3. Chehel Maqaleh, pp 80-85.

anarchy following the death of Náder Sháh, they were driven out of that province. At present a small number of them remain near Shushtar and still live after the tradition of their tribe, but they have forgotten Turkish which was their native language and now speak the local Persian dialect, Shushtari.

2. History of Tabarestán and My Notes.<sup>1</sup>

Kasravi

insists that the territory of Mážandarán, formerly called Tabarestán, is of great importance from the historical point of view, because of its high mountains, narrow roads and natural fortifications. This part of Irán always attracted the interest of rulers. A separate chapter of Iran's history has been written in this region with its unique natural features, whose people could defend themselves more effectively than other Iranians when they were attacked by enemies. Early in the 2nd century A.H. (8th century A.D.) the Arabs were able to conquer many territories; in Asia they advanced as far as the border of China and settled on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, and in Europe they reached the river Loire. The natives of Tabarestán, however, still struggled hard to retain their own customs, and to save their ancestral religion. Kasravi describes their struggle. As we know, he had visited Mážandarán and had been very much

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1. Chehel Maqáleh, pp 12-19. Tárikh-e Tabarestán va Yaddashtha-ye man.

impressed by its beautiful scenery; for this reason he took a special interest in its history. He mentions a number of texts which he studied and used for writing the history of Tabarestán.<sup>1</sup>

3. Cities and Rulers (Shahr-há va Shahriáran).<sup>2</sup> Kasravi concluded from his historical investigations that the majority of historians felt obliged to show that the founder of every city was a king. Geographers such as Yaqut ol-Hamavi (d.1229) and Hamdollah Mostowfi (d.1349) accepted the popular view that any city must have been built by a ruler. As a general principle, however, a number of people who live together build a village in which the way of living gradually becomes civilized and the population increases, until eventually a city comes into being. Most of Iran's cities were peopled after Islam. Kasravi searched the records of their history

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1. (1) Tárikh Fotuh Jebál Tabarestán, by Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ebn Mohammad ol-Ma'dí. (2) 'Egad ol-Sahar va Qalayed al-Dorar by Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ebn Mohammad ol-Izadí. (3) Bávandnameh, by an unknown writer. (4) Tárikh-e Tabarestán, by Mohammad ebn Hasan ebn Esfandiar Amoli (Professor E. G. Browne published an abridged translation of this work in English, Leiden 1905). (5) Tárikh-e Mazandaran by Ebn Abi Moslem. (6) Tárikh-e Tabarestán va Ruyan va Mazandaran, by Sayyed Zahir ol-Din Mar'ashi. (7) Al-Tadvin fi Jebal ol-Sharvin, by Mohammad ebn Hasan Khan Sani' ol-Dowleh. (8) Tárikh-e Tabarestán, by Mirzá Ja'far Arte'i. (9) Tárikh-e Tabarestán by Shaykh 'Ali Giláni. (10) Tárikh-e Mazandaran, by Mowlana Owldá 'olláh Ámoli. (11) Tárikh-e Mazandaran, by 'Ali ebn Jamal ol-Din Ruyáni.

2. Chehel Maqáleh, pp 114-117.

and found that most of Iran's cities were established in this way. For example, Mashhad was a village called Gonábád until Hárún ol-Rashid and the Emám Rezá were buried there (in A.D. 809 and 818 respectively), after which time it gradually became civilized and populous; now it is the chief city of Khorásán. Bárforush (now Bábol), the biggest city of Mázándáran, was formerly a village called Mámátir, but today it is a very important commercial centre. Ábádán in Khuzestán was a small village at the beginning of the Qájár period, and only began to grow in importance in Mohammad Sháh's reign when ships were enabled to sail up the Shatt ol-'Arab to it. Tehrán was a village before the rise of the Qájárs, and now is the capital of Iran. Kasravi proves that none of the important modern cities were founded by kings, but finds evidence that some ancient cities were royal foundations. Although the building of a city is not an easy task, even for a very strong and powerful king, it has to be admitted that the founders of cities in Sásánid and Achaemenid days were mostly kings. Kasravi's objection to other historians is that they insisted that only a king could found a city.

4. The Afshár Tribe (Il-e Afshár).<sup>1</sup> Kasravi in his investigations found evidence about the history of this tribe in the chronicle of Vassáf (which covers the period 1257-1328). The

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1. Chehel Maqáleh, p.122.

Afshars migrated to Iran during the Saljuqid period, i.e. in the 6th century A.H./12th century A.D., and first of all occupied part of Khuzestán. Later some of them moved to other provinces. They helped the Safavid kings, being one of the Qizilbāsh tribes which brought that Shi'ite dynasty to power.

5. Shams ol-Din Toghrá'i.<sup>1</sup> This brave Iranian twice saved Tabriz when the Mongols invaded Iran. During that time the people were suffering great hardship, as the barbarous Mongols showed no mercy and did not spare even innocent children. When the Mongols advanced towards Ázarbáiján, Shams ol-Din Toghrá'i prepared to defend Tabriz, and the people were ready to fight. Knowing this, the Mongols did not approach Tabriz but instead attacked Saráb and killed many people in that area. When they again intended to attack Tabriz, Shams ol-Din Toghrá'i through his cleverness and diplomacy saved the people from the Mongols. Kasravi<sup>2</sup> praises his courage, and says that Iranians should pay more attention to such heroic personalities in their country's history, whose names unfortunately have been neglected and are not known to the mass of the people.

6. Taymur Malek.<sup>3</sup> One of the historical figures whose

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1. Chehel Maqaleh, pp 266-273. This article was also reprinted in a collection of Kasravi's writings called Nik o Bad, published by the Azadegan party, Tehran 1327/1948.

2. Chehel Maqaleh, p.266.

3. Chehel Maqaleh, pp 274-279.

name should be remembered is Taymur Malek. He was a brave man who showed his courage and valour when the Mongols attacked Khojand, a town in Fargháná (Central Asia). He fearlessly met their attack, and killed enormous numbers of them. Later he joined Soltán Mohammad Khwárazmsháh, and eventually he became a mystic and went to Damascus. After a while, when the situation in Iran was quieter, he returned to Farghán, but was killed by a Mongol whom he had earlier blinded in battle. Kasravi stresses the importance of recognising such brave men,<sup>1</sup> and says that if Iran had had more men of this sort, the Mongols could not have conquered the country by treachery and terror. He again deplores the ignorance of modern Iranians about such figures.

7. The Báyondoris.<sup>2</sup> In this article Kasravi observes that Iran's history from the time of the Saljuqids till the Safavids is full of turmoil and insecurity. One of the most difficult periods was during the reign of the Báyondoris, which lasted for thirty-five years (1466-1501). This period has also been neglected by historians. Iran became weaker during the Báyondori period. The founder of the line was Hasan Beg, who was originally from the Aq Qoyunlu Torkoman tribe. He was known as Uzun Hasan and was their greatest ruler (d.1478). Their capital was Tabriz, and they ruled in

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1. Chehel Maqáleh, pp279.

2. Chehel Maqáleh, pp 303-309.

Ázarbáiján, Arrán, Fárs and Iraq. They were constantly at war. The last ruler of the line, Soltán Morád, was defeated and killed by Sháh Esmá'il (in 1503). The troubles of the Báyondori dynasty exemplify the many difficulties of Iran at that time.

8. History and the Historian (Tárikh va Tárikh-negár)<sup>1</sup>

This is one of the most valuable articles written by Kasravi. At the beginning he speaks of his interest in history, and says that there are many methods of writing a history book. One is that the historian simply describes an event, which to Kasravi seems inadequate and insignificant. Another method is that of interpreting a historical event; Kasravi thinks<sup>2</sup> that although this method is often used to deceive readers, nevertheless it is sometimes useful, because it can give moral guidance to readers, and he prefers it to the first method. The third method, which is to give readers the idea of a better way of life and of avoiding past mistakes through telling them about historical incidents, is the best method of all. It enables the reader to learn the facts of history and to learn lessons from them. Kasravi says that it is very difficult to write such history and that very few history books of this nature can be found.<sup>3</sup> There are also several other methods. From the beginning of

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1. Chehel Maqáleh,

2. Ibid., pp 314-315.

3. Ibid., p.316.

recorded time, kings or rulers have followed special policies of their own. Research into their policies and diplomacy is called political history. Kasravi thinks that books on political history are useful, but not for the mass of the people.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes people think that diplomacy has determined the course of events through the centuries, as if all the incidents which happen in the world have been the result of secret designs of rulers which history can uncover.

Kasravi thinks that the first world war was the result of many such hidden political designs; but even though a simple record of these would alone be valuable, a search for the deeper causes of such a great historical event would be much more admirable.<sup>2</sup> There is no need however, for a historian to refrain from writing about a historical event because he is ignorant of its causes. It is his duty to record events honestly and sincerely so that future generations may know the facts. For example, when Kasravi began to write the history of the Iranian Constitutional movement, some critics had denied the value of his efforts and accused him of not understanding the origins of this great revolution,<sup>3</sup> but in reply he says, "If I take your advice, I will never be able to write any sort of history at all. A history of the revolution in Iran, even if all the details of its causes and

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1. Chehel Magaleh, p.316.

2. Ibid., p.317.

3. Ibid., p.318.

origins are neglected, can still be a record of the most important phase of this country's history." He also says that it will at least give an idea of the number of people who sacrificed their lives for liberty.<sup>1</sup> Other critics had asked how historians could be trusted to tell the truth in such cases. He replies, "If we use our reason, we will find the false elements in history."<sup>2</sup> He stresses the fact that he did not depend only on what other people had written or said, and adds, "We have to use our brains and search deeply to get an accurate picture." He is convinced that a historian must be honest in his way of recording history, because, otherwise his writings will have no value.

In Kasravi's opinion,<sup>3</sup> the history of the Ghaznavids by Bayhaqi (d.1077) shows that its author was a trustworthy man. Besides recording events honestly, a historian should if possible look for the causes of an event. Those who consider every historical work as a reliable source from which to draw one's knowledge of a historical incident are very much mistaken. Kasravi<sup>4</sup> thinks that not everybody is capable of writing history; one must be very shrewd in order to avoid mistakes. Plutarch, whose aim in writing history was to illustrate the progress of the Greek people, is in Kasravi's

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1. Chehel Magaleh, p.319.

2. Ibid., p.320.

3. Ibid., p.322.

4. Ibid., p.323.

eyes<sup>1</sup> one of the greatest historians. In Plutarch's *Lives* we can see how he tried to compare Greek soldiers and rulers with Romans. Kasravi thinks that in the Persian language the only outstanding and profound historical works are Bayhaqi's history of the Ghaznavids and Eskandar Beg's history of Shah 'Abbás ('Alamárá-ye 'Abbási) composed in 1616.<sup>2</sup> He points out that there are Persian history books which are of little or no value, such as the Násekh ol-Tavárikh<sup>3</sup> written (in 1424) by Sharaf ol-Din 'Ali Yazdi, who wrote about Taymur and always tried to conceal his cruelty. Kasravi says that such persons had no right to call their books history.<sup>4</sup> He mentions the names of a few other historians who did not care whether or not they wrote the truth, such as 'Emád ol-Din Káteb Esfaháni (d.1201), who wrote about the Saljuqid dynasty and criticized their way of governing and their cruelty, although he admired their devotion and great respect for religion.

#### Kasravi's Style of History Writing.

Kasravi wrote books and articles on many different subjects, but his greatest effort was in the field of history, and he is undoubtedly one of the greatest Iranian historians. He remarks that many previous Iranian historians had tried to record the events of their own ages, but having developed

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1. Chehel Magaleh, p.321.

2. Kasravi had probably not been able to read the General History (Jame' ol-Tabarikh) of Rashid ol-Din (d.1318).

3. According to E. G. Browne, Literary History of Persia, Vol.3. pp 362-365, Sharaf ol-Din 'Ali Yazdi's chronicle of Taymur is called Zafarnameh.

4. Chehel Magaleh, p.325.

a very rhetorical literary style, they always wanted to write about historical events in this style and were quite unable to record them in simple language. Kasravi himself strove above all to verify the facts of history.

Although one cannot deny that Kasravi's criticisms of former historians are in themselves justified, they do not take into account all the aspects of the matter. Since those historians lived in very different circumstances when there was no freedom of speech or writing (for no such freedom existed in Iran before the Constitutional revolution), they had to be careful about what they wrote and could not possibly have discussed the facts openly. Secondly, the value placed on a book in those days depended so much on its style of composition that most historians had no choice except to write in a very rhetorical way. They could not in those circumstances have written frankly and simply.

While Kasravi's criticisms of former historians<sup>1</sup> were thus rather unfair, his own great efforts in objective history writing deserve the highest admiration. He used to say that history was his favourite subject, whatever country it concerned,<sup>2</sup> and he never abandoned his historical studies. He never trusted what previous historians had said, but always personally searched for the truth. He never tried to impress

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1. Chehel Maqáleh (Tárikh va Tárikh-negár), pp 314-324.

2. Shahr-e

his readers by writing elaborate rhetorical sentences. He mentions Mirzā Mahdi Khān Astarābādi's two histories of Nāder Shāh as good examples of the style favoured by famous historians of the past, full of verbiage but not so full of trustworthy information.<sup>1</sup> Kasravi's chief aims, as has been said, were to verify historical facts and to narrate and explain them in simple language;<sup>2</sup> his success in these aims made him internationally known.

In Kasravi's opinion, no trustworthy history of Iran had yet been written.<sup>3</sup> He calls upon his compatriots to find out all they can about their country's past life through the centuries, and write it down. He observes that Iran's history after Islam is very confusing, indeed almost dark, because the numerous historians who appeared in Islamic times did not in general write objectively; their main intention was to speak about the kings or rulers of their own day, and they nearly always praised them in an exaggerated fashion. Kasravi looks upon few of them as real historians; he says that their statements cannot be accepted as they stand and should not be referred to as prima facie evidence. One of Kasravi's methods was to piece together from documents the

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1. Zaban-e Pak, Tehran 1323/1944, p.4. Mirzā Mahdi Khān's two works are the Tarikh-e Naderi and the Dorreh-ye Naderieh.

2. Chehel Maqāleh (Tarikh va Tarikh-negar), p.314.

3. Ibid.

particulars of historical events which no previous historian had recorded.<sup>1</sup> He thinks that it is wrong to reproduce an imaginary image of a king or ruler unless one has proof. In the past everybody thought that history was concerned only with kings and rulers and historians; they used to call their works "History of the dynasty..." (Khāndān-nāme), or "History of the King..." (Shāhnāme). Most of the historians who wrote about Iran's history after Islam did this; they thought that it was quite sufficient if they wrote only about kings and their battles. Kasravi thinks that historiography should cover a much vaster field,<sup>2</sup> though he admits that kings and rulers have been great makers of history, especially in the past times when the mass of the people possessed no power or influence in any sphere. He compares history with a statue and kings with its frame.<sup>3</sup> The general situation of countries in past times, their security, rebellions, friendships or hostilities with their neighbours etc., cannot be understood without reference to the careers of kings or rulers. For instance, Kasravi<sup>4</sup> remarks that the way in which the Iranians got rid of the Arabs cannot be understood without reference to the careers of rulers who came to power in the 3rd and 4th centuries A.H. (9th and 10th

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1. e.g. In the Tārīkh-e Mosha'sha'iyān vā Pānsad-sāleh-ye Khuzestan.

2. Shahrīārān-e Gommān, vol.1, Introduction.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

centuries A.D.); and that the social situation in Iran in the 8th century A.H. (14th century A.D.) can be better understood with the help of a study of Shaykh Safi's life-story and the power which he exercised.

Kasravi recognises that European orientalists<sup>1</sup> have done a great deal of research about Iran's history and have produced many useful books, but thinks that long years will be required before the whole picture can be made clear. Iranians must not depend entirely on what the orientalists have left behind, but must themselves work to throw light on the dark corners of their country's history.

On the whole, Kasravi thinks, Iranian historians have not put their researches on a logical and national basis. On the other hand, investigations of Iran's history by European and American orientalists have not been 100 per cent acceptable. Iranian historians must try to do their researches in a more up-to-date way. In particular they must use the history of other countries, and especially neighbouring countries, for checking Iranian history; this can be very helpful in solving historical problems, in view of the close connections between these peoples and the Iranians in past times. Kasravi himself, with his knowledge of foreign languages, made use of this method in his own historical researches.

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1. Shahriārān-e Gommā, vol.1, Introduction.

Without doubt Kasravi's greatest single achievement as a historian was the compilation of his two volume Tárikh-e Mashruteh-ye Iran (History of the Constitutional Movement). This book is particularly valuable, firstly because of the unique importance of its subject, and secondly because Kasravi was a witness of many of the events which he has recorded. He himself had direct contact with the Constitutionalists in Tabriz,<sup>1</sup> which was the main centre of the movement, and he gives a trustworthy even if incomplete account of the events at other centres such as Tehran, Rasht and Esfahán. Even now, after sixty years, many facts about the Constitutional revolution remain unknown. Kasravi was the first scholar who did research into this subject and studied its significance. His book is still the best and fullest account of this great revolution. It will certainly be useful if present-day Iranian historians try to write more about the causes and results of Iran's great Constitutional revolution, and to produce a complete history of it; but they will hardly find any mistakes or false statements of fact in Kasravi's account. In this, as in all his historical works, he did his best to be accurate and objective. He definitely deserves to be called an efficient and conscientious historian.

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1. Tárikh-e Mashruteh-ye Irán, p. 6.

## CHAPTER THREE

KASRAVI'S LINGUISTIC STUDIES AND THEORIES

As Kasravi mentions at the beginning of his book Zabān-e Pāk (Pure Speech),<sup>1</sup> the purification of the Persian language was one of his chief aims. He suggests two ways of reaching this goal:

1. The deficiencies of the Persian language must be understood.
2. Research is necessary to find pure old Persian words with which to replace Arabic words.

As regards his first suggestions, Kasravi considers that the use of Arabic words has spoilt the Persian language and is almost always unnecessary.<sup>2</sup> In a sentence of ten words, five words are likely to be Arabic, and this ruins the originality of the Persian language.

We should bear in mind that the influence of Arabic upon Persian did not arise either from the Arab conquest and the two centuries of Arab rule in Iran, or from the great respect of the Iranians for Islam. When the Arabs were most

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1. Kasravi, Zabān-e Pāk, Tehran 1323/1944, pp 2-4.

2. Zabān-e Pāk, p.3.

powerful and the Iranians became profoundly attached to Islam, the Persian language stayed relatively pure, as can be seen in the works of early writers such as Rudaki (d. 940-1) and Ferdowsi (d. 1025-6). This proves that the Arabs did not intend to adulterate the Persian language, and that it was not they, but later Iranian writers, who introduced the impurities. Knowledge of Arabic was regarded as an honour, and most Iranian writers who knew it tried to show their proficiency by writing books in Arabic or even composing Arabic poetry. They used to compete with one another in writing Arabic, and even today mollás and religious leaders still use Arabic very often.

In Kasravi's opinion,<sup>1</sup> a language is independent if it contains a number of words which belong to it, and if people obey the same rules in their way of writing and reading it. The Persian language, however, has been like a toy in the hands of the writers, who have shaped it in any way they liked. One writer would use a moderate amount of Arabic words, another would use them to excess, and another would make a mixture of the two languages. There are many examples of this confusion, as one can see by reading e.g. Ferdowsi's Sháhnámeh, with its simple style and pure Persian vocabulary, and the Anvár-e Sohayli, a highly ornamented and arabicized version of the animal fables Kalileh va Demneh composed by

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1. Zabán-e Pák, p. 4.

Hosayn Vá'ez Káshefi (d. 1504). Their styles of writing are so different<sup>1</sup> that they have nothing in common; yet both are supposed to be Persian. A person capable of reading and understanding the Sháhnámeh will not necessarily be able to read the Anvár-e Sohayli. Anyone who compares the two history books, Tárikh-e Jahángoshá and Dorreh-ye Náderi, both written by the 18th century historian Mirzá Mahdi Khán, might conclude that they are too different in style to be from one author. Kasravi says that for a thousand years the Persian language has been shaped by the hands of individuals. Even the historians played with it, preferring grandiloquence of style to description of historical facts. Their innocent or ignorant readers thought this to be an art and admired their style and even called it miraculous. In the past writers paid less attention to the meaning of sentences than to their ornamentation with Arabic words.

In the present age, we cannot claim that modern Persian is either complete or pure.<sup>2</sup> Even today, if one wants to learn Persian properly, one ought to know Arabic. Although the Persian language is one of the easiest in the world, when mixed with Arabic it becomes difficult. Kasravi observes<sup>3</sup> that while a number of new words such as

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1. Zabán-e Pák, pp 4-8.

2. Zabán-e Pák, p. 12.

3. Ibid., p. 8.

mehmáneh (hotel), bálákháneh (upper story), ráh-e áhan (railway), durbin (camera), dó-charkheh (bicycle), are clear enough to those who speak Persian, there also are words such as mashruteh (constitutional government), Dár ol-Showrá (house of parliament), tasvib (parliamentary approval) which are originally Arabic and are only learnt with difficulty. As a result the Persian language has become unpractical (bi-káreh). Kasravi's opponents, however, did not think that his ideas were at all practical, and they raised various objections.<sup>1</sup> One of these was that poets and writers such as Sa'di or Háfez, whose works are the pride of Iran, did not write in pure Persian; so if Iranians today were to use Persian words instead of Arabic, these great works would no longer be intelligible to them and to future generations. Kasravi's reply is that Háfez and Sa'di misled the people and that today Iranians need a strong and practical language.<sup>2</sup>

#### Kasravi's Studies of the Persian Language

Kasravi was one of the few Iranians who made a serious effort to do scholarly research into the Persian language and to find native Persian words instead of Arabic ones. His researches in this field were very extensive. In order to

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1. Zabán-e Pák, pp 8-29.

2. Ibid., p. 9.

find or invent purely Persian words, he studied nearly all the Persian dialects spoken in different parts of Iran; and he appears to have been the first Iranian to do this. His immense interest in the subject helped him to achieve a great deal of what he had in view. Apart from his enthusiasm, the secret of his success lay in his proficiency in Pahlavi,<sup>1</sup> Armenian and Arabic, as well as Persian. He put his knowledge of all these languages to good use in his researches, which are solidly based and carefully reasoned. The books which he has left behind on these subjects have been a great help to subsequent linguists. They are the following:

1. Námhá-ye Deh-há va Shahrhá-ye Irán (Village and City Names of Iran), 2 vols., Tehran 1324/1945.
  2. Ázari, yá Zabán-e Bástán-e Ázarbáiján (Ázari, or the ancient language of Ázarbáiján), Tehran 1035/1926.
  3. Káfnámeh (Treatise on the letter Káf), edited by Yahyá Zoká, Tehran 1331/1952.
  4. Zabán-e Pák (Pure Language), Tehran 1323/1944.
  5. Zabán-e Fârsi va Ráh-e Rasá va Taváná gardánidan-e án (The Persian language and the way to make it expressive and strong), edited by Yahyá Zoká, Tehran 1335/1956.
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1. Kasravi was one of the very few contemporary Iranian scholars who studied the Old Persian languages. Others were Ebráhim Pur Dávud, Malek ol-Sho'ará Bahár, and in the younger generation Sâdeq Hedáyat.

Kasravi's researches into the Persian language and his studies of place names were closely connected and may be reviewed together. He states in the introduction to his book on place names<sup>1</sup> that the Iranians are becoming very europeanized, and tend to believe whatever Europeans say. If a European does research about Iranian history or produces a book about the Persian language, the Iranians will accept it without hesitation. This shows how much they are infatuated by European civilization. It would not be right however, to put all orientalists into the same class. Iranians can seldom measure up to scholarly orientalists such as Marquart or Darmesteter; but most orientalists are not trustworthy. Kasravi<sup>2</sup> states that although research into place names is not such an important subject that life would be any worse without it, he had nevertheless written his first study of this kind, on the names Tehrân and Shemirân, in his leisure time with the main pupose of proving to orientalists his capability to do scholarly research. Philology, however, is not really essential; two or three philologists in a century will be quite sufficient.

The names of most Iranian cities and villages are derived from old Persian languages, and are therefore not generally intelligible or not correctly understood. Kasravi classifies

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1. Kasravi, Námhá-ye Deh+há va Shahrihá-ye Irân, vol. 1, Tehran 1324/1945, pp 2-5.

2. Ibid, p. 3.

Iranian place names by their suffixes as follows:

1. ván, áván, vin; e.g. Mádaván, Márván, Andáván, Khiáván, Shirván.
2. gán, kán, ghán, yán, ján, gin, yin; e.g. Zangán, Ázarbáiján, Ardakán, Mamaqán..
3. hán, han. Vargahán, Ardahán, Zarhán.
4. Khán, khun, kháná; e.g. Haftkhun, Kordkhun,
5. dán; e.g. Hamadán; Sardán.
6. zán, zán; e.g. Zuzán, Rázán.
7. lán, alán, lam; e.g. Márálán, Sulán.
8. rán, arán, or rám, rom; e.g. Shemirán, Tehrán, Gahróm.
9. án, in; e.g. Irán, Gilán, Máhán.
10. bán, e.g. Safídbán.
11. sán; Misán, Sisán.
12. vár, ávár, var; e.g. Sabzvár, Dinvár.
13. vá, ává; e.g. Tárvá, Bordvá, Mardvá.
14. á, av, e.g. Hasanav, Jamlav, Sarv.
15. gur, kur; e.g. Namakur, Shamkur.
16. zár, zar; e.g. Kordzár, Esfzár.
17. bár; e.g. Rudbár, Zangbár.
18. vil, bil; e.g. Zuvil, Ardabil.
19. vir; e.g. Armavir.
20. sár, sar; e.g. Sangsár, Násár, Sisar.

These suffixes resemble each other and are all combinations of two or three letters, which suggest that they are linguistically related. In the evolution of languages transformation of words is a very important factor. The Persian language in the course of its history has passed through so many consonant and vowel changes that Old Persian (Pahlavi) is unintelligible to speakers of modern Persian and appears to have no similarity with it. For example, the modern Persian dān(estan) ("to know") was in ancient times used only in southern Iran; in the north it was pronounced zān, and it is still pronounced zān in some places. In the Kurdish language, which is one of the many dialects of Persian, it is pronounced zānin. In Kasravi's opinion, the twenty place-name suffixes which he has listed are all originally one word, which was modified through the centuries in accordance with different accents and dialects. He proves his point by citing names of towns and villages in different parts of Iran which incorporate names of rulers.<sup>1</sup>

In his conclusion, Kasravi<sup>2</sup> says, "We do not have much difficulty in finding the meanings of these suffixes at the end of village names. They assuredly have meanings such as region, fatherland, country; and some of them are still used

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1. Kasravi, Námhá-ye Deh-há va Shahr-há-ye Irán, vol.1, p.4.

2. Ibid. Vol 2, p.12.

as ordinary suffixes in Persian or related languages. Even if the meanings are not identical, they are evidently very similar."

In the literary periodical Armaghān,<sup>1</sup> a certain Mr. Tálebzádeh wrote an article in 1311/1932 on the subject of Iranian village and city names. In it he mentions Kasravi's work on this subject and praises Kasravi's profound and detailed scholarship. He notes that Kasravi was one of the few contemporary Iranian scholars whose research drew the attention of European orientalists. Among these was a Russian Professor Beyovski who had expressed admiration for Kasravi's great achievement and had described Kasravi's researches in the field of language as unique.

Kasravi's book on Ázari, or the Old Language of Ázarbáiján,<sup>2</sup> is one of the most interesting of his many works. In it he tries to prove that the people of Ázarbáiján are of Iranian origin and Aryan race, and to refute in a logical and reasonable way the arguments of those who claim that the Ázarbáijánis are not Iranians but Turks.<sup>3</sup> The book is both a historical and a linguistic study. The evidence assembled

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1. Armaghān, founded by the distinguished scholar Vahid Dastgerdi (1896-1942) and continued by his son Nasīm, was the principal Iranian literary periodical during its 25 years' existence (1919-1944).
  2. Kasravi, Ázari yā Zabān-e Bastān-e Ázarbáiján, Tehrān, 1305/1926
  3. Ibid. p.6.

by Kasravi is very weighty; he successfully proves his case.

In the introduction,<sup>1</sup> Kasravi mentions that twenty years previously a number of Ottoman Turks and Caucasians had written articles about this matter, and that when the Union and Progress party (Ettehad va Taragqi) came to power in Ottoman Turkey, one of its aims had been to attract and unite Turkish-speaking people in other countries. The Iranian press, which was ignorant and probably incapable of replying in a reasonable way, argued the point very stupidly. They said that the Mongols brought the Turkish language to Ázarbáiján and spread it among the people; but this was not a correct answer because the Mongol language is very different from Turkish. Kasravi states<sup>2</sup> that the truth about the Azari language became clear to him after he had studied the Grapar<sup>3</sup> and Pahlavi languages for three years.

The first chapter of the book<sup>4</sup> is entitled "Ázarbáiján at the dawn of history." Everyone familiar with history knows that four thousand years ago the people called Aryans migrated from their original homeland and spread into parts of Asia and Europe where they defeated the native peoples of the different territories and settled down. A number of them migrated to Iran, and one section became the ruling power in

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1. Ázari ya Zaban-e Bastán-e Ázarbaiján, p.6.

2. Ibid., p.3.

3. Ancient Armenian.

4. Ázari, pp 5-8.

the north west part of Iran, i.e. Ázarbáiján, Hamadán, Kermánsháh, Qazvin, Esfáhán and Tehran. These people were called Medes (Mád) and the territory which they ruled was called Little Media (Mád-e Khord). The Iranian territories beyond their control were called Great Media (Mád-e Bozorg). Kasravi recognises<sup>1</sup> that the people of Iran have sprung from a mixture of many nations and races, and that it is quite impossible to find any pure race in the world today. The Aryans themselves mixed with the natives of Iran as soon as they arrived. Today the best way of learning about a nation's origin is to study its language; and this applies to Ázarbáiján.

Kasravi accepts the view, held by most modern scholars, that Zoroaster probably originated from Ázarbáiján<sup>2</sup> and that the language of the Avestá<sup>3</sup> is a north Iranian language.<sup>4</sup> When Alexander the Great invaded Iran, a leader in Ázarbáiján named Áturpát saved the province, which came to be called Áturpátágán (in Greek, Atropatene) after him. One of the most important clues in the investigation of a nation's origin is the language of the names of its mountains, rivers, villages and towns.<sup>5</sup> Place names in Ázarbáiján may be

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1. Ázari, p.6.

2. Ibid., p.7.

3. The earliest Zoroastrian scriptures.

4. Perhaps Median.

5. Ázari, pp 8-9. In the periodical Áhmaghán, year 24, vols. 1 and 2, pp 89-94, Mr. Izadyar published an article on the ancient Ázari language, which expresses ideas similar to Kasravi's in this respect.

divided into three categories.

1. Names whose meanings have not yet been clarified, such as Tabriz, Khoy, Salmás.
2. Names whose meanings have been clarified through linguistic research, such as Marand, Arvanaq, Márálán.
3. Names which are not altogether clear, but presumably come in many cases from the language of the pre-Aryan inhabitants. The names in the first two categories are understandably derived from the Aryan language, and they are the most numerous. Kasravi infers from this that the Ázarbáijánis were predominantly Aryan.

Kasravi then moves on to the main subject of the book, namely the old language of Ázarbáiján.<sup>1</sup> He remarks that Iran's history becomes much less obscure after the coming of Islam.<sup>2</sup> When the Arabs invaded Iran, they were delighted by the pleasant conditions and good pastures of Ázarbáiján province, where they settled and ruled for three centuries.<sup>3</sup> The native Ázarbáijánis nevertheless preserved their language and gradually assimilated the Arabs. Arab geographers mention the language of Ázarbáiján as an independent language and call it Ázari.

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1. Ázari, pp 9-11.

2. Ibid., p.13.

3. In the early days all these territories were under one governor's rule.

1. Ebn Howqal (d.877) in his Ketáb ol-Masálek va'l-Mamálek<sup>1</sup> describes Ázarbáiján, Arrán and Armenia, and mentions that the people of these provinces spoke Persian and seldom knew Arabic.
2. Mas'udi (d.956), the famous historian and traveller, describes in his Ketáb ol-Tanbih va'l-Eshraf<sup>2</sup> the great Iranian cities of Khorásán, Ázarbáiján, Rayy and Tabarestán, and states that all of them had formerly been ruled by one king under one flag, and that the people all spoke one language.
3. The great and learned traveller Abu 'Abdollah (d.1000) divides Iran into eight provinces in his book Ahsan ol-Taqásim,<sup>3</sup> and says that the people spoke one language.
4. Yáqut ol-Hamavi (1179-1222) states in his great geographical encyclopaedia Mo'jam ol-Boldán<sup>4</sup> that the Ázarbáijánis spoke Ázari.

These reports prove that the people of Ázarbáiján then spoke a language called Ázari which was a branch of Persian.

In the next chapter,<sup>5</sup> Kasravi asks "How and when did the Turkish language come to Ázarbáiján?" It is clear that

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1. Al-Masálek va'l-Mamálek<sup>Thw</sup>, Hawqal, Leiden, 1873, p.250.

2. Al-Tanbih va'l-Eshraf, Mas'udi, Cairo, 1938, p.87.

3. Ahsan ol-Taqásim, Moqadassi, Leiden, 1877, p.259.

4. Ázari, pp.13-15.

5. Ibid., pp.13-15.

the people of Ázarbáiján were predominantly of Aryan race, and that as late as the 6th century A.H./11th century A.D. they still spoke Ázari.<sup>1</sup> The question arises how and when they began to speak Turkish? Historical evidence shows that the Turkish language was brought into Iran during the Saljuqid period by the immigration of Turkish tribes.

Before that time there were either no Turks or only a small number of Turks living in the various parts of Iran. After the defeat of Soltán Mas'ud of Ghazneh by the Saljuqids (in 1040), a large immigration of Turks took place. Under the great kings of this nation, the Turks spread within twenty years over all parts of Iran and Iraq and later also into Syria and Asia Minor.

In the next chapter,<sup>2</sup> Kasravi discusses the first settlement of Turks in Ázarbáiján. Although the boundaries of Iran were opened to Turkish immigration by the Saljuq conquest, Kasravi finds evidence<sup>3</sup> that a limited number of Turks had settled in Ázarbáiján before that time. Soltán Mahmud of Ghazneh, after invading Bokhárá and Transoxiana in 1025, brought back a group of Turks and settled them in Khorásán. A minority of them separated and made their way via Kermán to Esfahán. Mahmud ordered 'Ala ol-Dowleh, the governor of Esfahán, to return them or kill them, but some

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1. Ázari, pp 5-17.

2. Ibid., p.17.

3. Ibid., p.19.

of them learnt of this and escaped to Ázarbáiján. These were the first Turks to migrate in a group to Ázarbáiján.

In the next chapter,<sup>1</sup> Kasravi examines the position in Ázarbáiján during the Saljuqid period. Within a short period Ázarbáiján was conquered by the Saljuqids,<sup>2</sup> whose army consisted entirely of Turkish tribesmen. Turks settled everywhere in Iran; but it is certain that Ázarbáiján attracted them more than other provinces. From then until the Mongol invasion of Iran the rulers of Ázarbáiján were Turks. Although the Turks gradually spread their language and gave Turkish names to certain villages where they settled, the Ázari language continued to be spoken by the mass of the people in Ázarbáiján during the Saljuqid period; Turkish was spoken only by the new-comers.

Kasravi's next chapter<sup>3</sup> is a study of Ázarbáiján under Mongol rule. Most of the Mongols in the invading armies settled in Ázarbáiján; in race and language they were entirely different from the Turks. After they became Moslems (in 1295), they mixed with the Turks and ceased to speak Mongol.<sup>4</sup> Although the Italian traveller Marco Polo in his account of his visit to Tabriz (in 1271-2) does not mention the Turks, this is probably because they were only a minority. On the

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1. Ázari, pp. 17-18.

2. Mainly in the years 1049 and 1054.

3. Ázari, p. 18.

4. Ibid., pp. 18-20.

other hand, the Moorish traveller Ebn Battuteh, who came to Tabriz in the reign of the Mongol king Abu Sa'id (1316-1334), mentions the Turks in the city. Ebn Bazzáz, who in the late 15th century wrote Safvat ol-Safá, a biography of Shaykh Safi ol-Din (d.1334; the founder of <sup>the</sup> Safavi order and ancestor of the Safavid kings), tells many stories in which he speaks of the Turks and Tájiks (i.e. Iranians) as two different nations. Hamdolláh Mostawfi (1281-2-1349), in the geographical third part of his Nozhat ol-Qolub, quotes some sentences in (old) Ázari; as he knew Ázarbáiján well and was in a position to give accurate information about its people and their language, the quotations prove that a number of the natives living in his time at Tabriz still spoke the (old) Ázari language.

In the following chapter,<sup>1</sup> Kasravi studies the position in Ázarbáiján after the fall of the Mongol Ilkhánid dynasty. This occurred when Abu Sa'id died in 1334 leaving no heir to the throne. There ensued a great struggle amongst the Mongol leaders, in which their capital Tabriz was badly damaged. In the following period, a great number of Turks came to Ázarbáiján, particularly with the armies of Timur-e Lang (1381-1405). Although the Turks were always fighting among themselves, they became the dominant power, and as a result their

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1. Ázari, p.20.

language was widely used. In the next chapter,<sup>1</sup> on Ázarbáiján during the Safavid period, Kasravi finds that by the 10th century A.H./16th century A.D., when the Safavids rose to power under Sháh Esmá'il (1501-1524), Turkish had already become the language of the masses in Ázarbáiján.<sup>2</sup> Moreover the Safavid partisans were all from Turkish tribes, and the important posts were given to Turks. The Turkish language was used in the Safavid court, whether at Tabriz (1501-1530), Qazvin (c.1530-1598), or Esfahan (1598-1722). The titles conferred by the Safavids were often Turkish, such as Qardash (brother), Yuldash (companion). During their wars with the Ottoman Turks, who were of course also Turkish-speaking, they ceded (by a treaty of 1590) all Ázarbáiján except Ardabil<sup>3</sup> to the Ottomans (who restored it to Iran by a treaty of 1612). The (old) Ázari language gradually ceased to be spoken in Ázarbáiján except by a few families and in a small number of villages. The Safavid régime strengthened the position of the Turkish language, which had taken root in Ázarbáiján under the Saljuqids; and thus it rose in the course of seven centuries to predominance. In the constitutional struggle (1906-1909), one of the many wishes of the Ázarbáijáni people was that Persian should be reintroduced in their land.

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1. Ázari, pp. 21-23.

2. Ibid., p.22.

3. Ibid., pp. 21-25.

The languages of southern and northern Iran form the subject of the next chapter.<sup>1</sup> Kasravi emphasizes that the spoken and written Persian of today is basically the same language which the forefathers of the modern Iranians have used since thousands of years ago. This language was brought to Iran by the Aryan invaders. No language ever remains pure and untouched by the vicissitudes of history, and the language of the Iranians changed as the centuries passed. If the language of the Avestá, which Kasravi dates from about three thousand years ago,<sup>2</sup> is compared with the language of the Achaemenid inscriptions of Bisotun, marked differences between them are seen. Nevertheless it is clear that Avestic, Pahlavi and Persian are basically one and the same language, even though differently written and changed by the passage of time. It must also be borne in mind that the successive empires of ancient Iran were founded by three different groups, the Medes, the Persians and the Parthians. The Medes came from northern Iran, the Persians from southern Iran, the Parthians from eastern Iran. They nevertheless had a linguistic unity, because the language they spoke was the same apart from small differences in the pronunciation of words: e.g. the southerners said Samiráń, the northerners Shamiráń. Avestic was a north Iranian form of the language.

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1. Ázari, p.26.

2. Ibid., pp. 26-27.

Kasravi thinks that Avestic can be taken as the first example of the language of Ázarbáiján.<sup>1</sup>

Kasravi then discusses the emergence of the Iranian dialects.<sup>2</sup> He draw attention to the need for research into the different modern dialects of Iran.<sup>3</sup> Apart from the Persian language, which is the essential national language, a great number of dialects are spoken such as Samnání, Mázandarání, Giláki, Shushtari, etc. Archaeology has shown that when the Aryans came to Iran, natives of different origins were already living in the country and that their languages also were different from one another. The Aryans did not eliminate these people, but intermingled with them and mixed their own language with their languages. As a result dialects emerged, such as Samnání. Kasravi thinks, however, that this does not apply to (old) Ázari,<sup>4</sup> which he maintains was originally the language of the Medes, though after their immigration to Ázarbáiján it must have been mixed to some extent with the language of the natives.

In another chapter,<sup>5</sup> Kasravi asks where are the places in which Ázari is still used. Ázari (i.e. old Ázari) did not completely vanish; as recently as sixty or seventy years

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1. Ázari, p.27.

2. Ibid., pp. 27-28.

3. Ibid., p.32.

4. Ibid., pp. 27-28.

5. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

ago, there were still some families and districts which used this language, e.g. around Zonuz and in Khalkhál.<sup>1</sup> In the 19th century Ázari was still quite widely known in Ázar-báiján, but was spoken differently from place to place. When a language is used only for speaking and not for writing, it soon forms many branches, each of which begins to develop independently. As a result Ázari became a dialect like Kurdish or Táleshi.

In another chapter,<sup>2</sup> Kasravi quotes a few examples of the (old) Ázari language. Since Ázari was used only for speaking, written texts of this language are not available, but here and there Kasravi has come across a few examples.<sup>3</sup> Ebn Bazzáz in his Safvat ol-Safá mentions that Shaykh Sadr ol-Din (d.1392) asked his father Shaykh Safi ol-Din, "When you saw Hazrat Shaykh Záhed, did you know what was in his heart?" Shaykh Safi ol-Din replied کار تمام بری - کار با نه which has the hidden meaning:

ای خانه آبادان کار تمام بود اما تنبیه مرشد و اما نه بود

"O prosperous householder, the work is finished, but the Guide's warning is still valid". These sentences show that Ázari was spoken with different dialects, of which Ardabili was one. ری was used in Ázari, because in the Ázari language dál (d) changed to rá (r).

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1. A certain Mr. Náser Ravá'i sent a few examples of the Khalkhali dialect of Azari to Kasravi, which Kasravi found very useful for his researches in this field.

2. Ázari, p.34.

3. Safvat ol-Safá, p.25.

Hamdollah Mostowfi in part III of his Nozhat ol-Qolub, speaking of Orumiyeh, says that in that city one can find yellow plums and "Prophet's pears (i.e. the best pears <sup>and Khalegi pears</sup>). Today when the Tabrizis see a person with a bad and unpleasant appearance, they say

1 انگور خلوقی است به در سب اندرین

Kholuqi grapes (the best grapes, from Reza'iyyeh) in a broken basket. The word <sup>به</sup> presumably is written in a wrong way; it should be written <sup>بی</sup>, which is used in many dialects including Lori. The word <sup>بی</sup> is also found in Shaykh Safi ol-Din's surviving quatrains (do-bayti-ha). Kasravi goes on to say that the famous English orientalist Le Strange, who published and translated the text of part III of the Nozhat-ol-Qolub, thought that the above mentioned sentences were in Turkish.<sup>2</sup> He made this mistake because, like others, he thought that the language of Āzarbāijān was then Turkish. It is probable that these quatrains are by Shaykh Safi ol-Din, and it is also clear that they are in the Āzari language, though their meanings are not understood.

In the next chapter<sup>3</sup> Kasravi discusses Shaykh Safi's quatrains. A certain Shaykh Hasan, the grandson of Shaykh

1. Nozhat ol-Qolub, 3rd discourse, ed. Guy Le Strange, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, XXIII, 1, Leiden 1915.

2. Āzari, p.34.

3. Ibid., p.36.

Safi ol-Din's spiritual guide Shaykh Zāhed Gilāni, quotes eleven quatrains of Shaykh Safi in the Selselat ol-Nasab ol-Safavieh, which was written during the reign of Shāh Solaymān Safavi (1666-1694). Although it is not stated in the Selselat ol-Nasab that these quatrains are in Ázari, Kasravi has no hesitation<sup>1</sup> in taking them as examples of that language,<sup>2</sup> because in them are found words which are still used in the language of the Ázarbáijánis, e.g. in the following:

همان هوئی دهمان هوئی دهمان هوئی  
 همان کوشن همان دشت دهمان کوئی  
 از واجم (ویان) تنها چرم بود  
 بهر شتری شرم می های می هوئی

This means "God is Almighty, and the world is only this plateau and desert. I need God's favour, but everywhere I go there is trouble."

Kasravi then, in another chapter,<sup>3</sup> considers what influences may be drawn from the examples just quoted. He recognises that the quatrains are a very limited source of information about Ázari and cannot be a conclusive testimony for Ázari; but they bring to light certain words which Kasravi proceeds to discuss.

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1. Ázari, pp 40-49.

2. They might perhaps be old Gilaki (Gilān dialect), because Shaykh Safi spent a long time in Gilan studying under Shaykh Zahed until the latter's death.

3. Ázari, p.46.

<u>Ázari</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Persian</u>
اسر - لرس	tear	اشك
اهرا	tomorrow	فردا
ته	you	تو
درده ژر	sorrowful	دردمند
بورى	horse	اسب

Even today the word درده ژر is used by Ázarbáijánis.

واھيدن	to tell	گفتن
كوشن	desert	بيابان

The syntax of Ázari forms the subject of the next chapter. Kasravi finds that it resembles the syntax of other Iranian dialects.<sup>1</sup> The close relationship between all the dialects in this respect gives further evidence that originally they were one language.

1. In the Persian language the adjective is placed after the noun, as in مرد نيك (the good man); but in Ázari the opposite is done.<sup>2</sup> Bába Táher of Hamadán (whose dialect quatrains written in the 11th century A.D. still survive) says تو كه مشكینه كاكل در قفائى "O you whose neck is laden with musk-scented locks!"

2. In Persian the thing possessed is placed <sup>before</sup> after the possessor, e.g. موى سر (mu-ye sar), and the same is

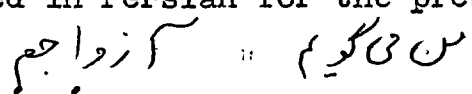
1. Ázari, p.49.

2. Ibid.


done in Ázari, as can be seen in the names of the villages and rivers dating from old times.

3. The prefix be is used in Persian for the imperative, but in Ázari bu is used: e.g. bu-jinam = be-chinam (let me pick).

4. The prefix mi, used in Persian for the present tense, is not seen in Ázari


  
azvājam - mi-guyam (I say)

5. Both in the verb and in the noun the Persian suffix am - "I do" or "my"-is replaced by im in Ázari: e.g.


  
āmadam - āmarim (I came)

Kasravi next discusses consonant changes and transposition which differentiate Ázari from Persian.<sup>1</sup> He points out that such change is a very important linguistic phenomenon and that it usually takes place in accordance with identifiable rules.

1. Instead of d (dāl) in Persian, r (rē) is often seen in Ázari, e.g. : āmarim = āmadam (I came).

2. Sometimes (tā) is replaced by r (rē) in Ázari, e.g. : delar - delat (your heart).

3. Ch (chim) in most words is changed in Ázari to j (jim), e.g. : bu-jinam = be-chinam (let me pick).

1. Ázari, pp 50-51.

4. S (sin) is often changed in Ázari tod(chim) e.g. today in Ázarbáiján they pronounce the word serish میریش cherish (gum).

5. Initialb(ba) in most words is changed to m(mim). Today Ázarbáijánis pronounce bahāneh بیانه (excuse) mahānā. مانا.

6. Initiald(dar)<sup>Pa</sup> in some words is changed to b (bā) e.g. even today pas (behind) is pronounced bas. The pronunciation of the name of the province Atorpatgān has been changed to Ázarbáijāna.

7. D (dāl) is changed to z (ze) at the beginning of some words, e.g. zanir = dānad (he knows).

Kasravi goes on to discuss the verb budan (Persian to be). In modern Persian two different stems, ast or hast and bāsh, are used for the present tense. In Ázari the stem is bud or bur instead of ast. Bur is sometimes used instead of shod (became) e.g. دلم زنده بشق عطفی بور <sup>1</sup> and sometimes instead of bāshad (will be). In one of the above quoted lines of Shaykh Safi, buri was used instead of bud - kār tamām buri (the task was finished).<sup>2</sup> Kasravi then quotes some other examples which he thinks are probably from (old) Ázari.<sup>3</sup> It may be assumed that when the people of Ázarbáiján spoke Ázari they also wrote poetry in that language. Apart

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1. Ázari, p.52. My heart is alive with love for the prophet.

2. Ibid., p.53.

3. Ibid., p.54.

from simple verses which can be found in almost every dialect, some higher and more literary poetry, particularly quatrains, was written in this language, but nearly all of it has vanished. Nevertheless a small amount has survived, including seventy lines by an unknown poet. A certain Khalifeh Sádeq,<sup>1</sup> who lived during the Safavid period, wrote some lines praising the Safavid kings. The name of another poet, described only as Ádam ("a man"), is not known at all;<sup>2</sup> but the names of two more Ázari poets are given as Káshfi<sup>3</sup> and Ma'ali.<sup>4</sup> The following is a quatrain by Kashfi.<sup>5</sup>

اشته چشمان چمن دل برده ما  
لواز خون دیلم خورده ما  
مگر خون به هر آن شیر یکده ته خورده  
که بان خون خورده ز خورده ما

How your eyes have captivated my heart!  
Your lips have drunk the blood (i.e. anguish) of my heart.  
Was blood mixed with every (drop of) milk which you drank?  
Have you accustomed yourself<sup>5</sup> to drinking blood.

These verses are by Ma'ali<sup>6</sup> :

سینه داغ و دلم داغ و جگر داغ  
ده یانم منده نی جای دیر داغ  
کیلری تازه هر دم کهنه زخم  
می نی هر زمان داغ بر داغ

1. Ázari, p.54.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p.56. The text has ma (us), but Kasravi thinks that it must have been corrupted because the meaning calls for teh (you).

6. Ázari, p.57.

My breast, my heart and my liver are aflame  
In my soul no place remains without fire,  
At every breath you renew my old wounds  
At every moment you add fuel to the flames.

Two lines from Ādam:<sup>1</sup>

دلدار دین و داغین بکیان شوم  
روحم اسیر و خونین بکیان شوم  
همه اچ در برانده بتو که نینه  
یرتم اچ در برانی بکیان شوم

O heart, where shall I come?  
O tearful, blood-stained eyes, where shall I go  
All the people drive me from their doors,  
If you also drive me from your door, where shall I go?

A poet called Rāji from Khalkhāl, a small town in the east  
of Āzarbāijān, also wrote a few lines in Āzari:<sup>2</sup>

دنیا خدانی و مردم کاروانی  
روز آلاله و روز خزان  
سیاه خیالی کند ناش نه گداز  
بمن داجن ایم ایشتی مان مانی

The world is a warehouse, its people form a caravan  
One day is springtime, full of wild tulips, and one day  
is autumn,

Man digs a black hole and calls it a tomb

(The fourth mesra which is unintelligible to us, and  
which Kasravi has not explained it in a footnote, is  
as follows:

بمن داجن ایم ایشتی مان مانی

Kasravi then cites examples of present day spoken Āzari.<sup>3</sup>

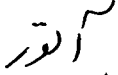
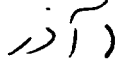
The (old) Āzari language did not become extinct all at once,

1. Āzari, p.58.

2. Ibid., p.59.

3. Ibid., p.60.

and there are still a few villages in Ázarbáiján where it is used. Through the centuries Ázari changed like any other language, and it was also subjected to the influence of Ázarbáijáni Turkish; moreover, being a dialect it was used differently in different places, and these local variations can still be traced today. The word Ázarbáiján itself suggests that the people of the province were originally for the most part Aryans. As already mentioned, Alexander the Great recognized Áturpát as the governor of Ázarbáijpan, and from him the land got its name Áturpatagán. This name is made up from two components, or indeed since Áturpát is itself a compound of the two words Átur and pát, from three components.

1. Átur (  ) means fire, and today has been modified to ázar (  ). The consonant t in pahlavi is often changed to z (zál) in Persian.<sup>1</sup>
2. The meaning of pát is not clear.
3. Gán. This word can be found at the end of many names of villages and cities, e.g. Arzangán, Zangán, sometimes with the g (gáf) changed to j (jim), e.g. Zanján.

Kasravi then considers the names of certain villages and towns of Ázarbáiján which are of (old) Ázari origin,<sup>2</sup> e.g.:

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1. Ázari, pp. 64-67.

2. Ibid., p. 64.

Arvanaq ( آروناق ), a village in the western part of Tabriz district, formerly pronounced Arának. This means "Little Arán". As we know, Arán is the name of a province mentioned in both Arabic and Persian books; it is the territory today called Caucasian, i.e. Russian, Ázarbáiján. According to some Armenian writers, the meaning of Arán is "place with hot climate," and the name was given to that part of Ázarbáiján because the people used to make their winter quarters there. In Armenian books the name gradually changed to Arának.

Aznáb ( ازناپ ). A place in Ázarbáiján; meaning not clear.

Bák ( باك ).<sup>1</sup> In Pahlavi this meant "God",<sup>2</sup> but in old Ázari it means "great".

Báku ( باكو ). This was originally Bakván, a compound of the two words bák and Ván. In Armenian texts we come across this form of the name. Ván ( وان ) means a place or land; Bakván ( باكوان ) meant "city of God".

Dilmagán ( ديلمقان ) is a small town in Ázarbáiján. The correct pronunciation was Daylamagán ( ديلمگان ), and the name was a compound of Daylam and gán, given to the town because a number of Daylamites lived in it.

Zarin Rud ( زرین رود ). The meaning of this name is not clear. The place was formerly called Qizil Owzan.

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1. c.f. Bagh in Baghdád ("gift of God").

2. Ázari, p.68.

Sard Rud ( سرد رود ), a place two miles out of Tabriz, meaning not clear.

Máralán ( مارالان ), a quarter of Tabriz. The name is a compound of the two syllables Már and lán. Már is the word Mád (Medes). In (Old) Ázari d (dál) was often changed to r (rā). Lán ( لان ) is another word for place; so Máralán means "place of the Medes".

Marágheh ( مراغه ). The correct original pronunciation was Márává ( مرادوا ), meaning "land of the Medes."

Hashtád sar ( هشتاد سر ), meaning eighty peaks, was the name of a mountain in Ázarbáiján, today called Hashteh-Sar ( هشت سر ).

Sir Edward Denison Ross translated a passage of Kasravi's book Ázari in a review which was published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of London in 1927.<sup>1</sup> He describes Kasravi as a man of great learning, versed not only in Arabic and Persian literature but also in the writings of Western scholars. He felt that it would be a pity that a scholarly work of this nature should run the risk of passing unnoticed, for it was representative of that new spirit of literary and historical research which had only recently begun to manifest itself among the Persians, and which deserved all possible encouragement. Kasravi had patiently devoted himself to the

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1. E. Denison Ross, J.R.A.S., 1927, p.148.

study of Ázari.

At the beginning of his book Káfnámeh,<sup>1</sup> Kasravi likens the Persian language to a tree, which if it is to be fruitful must have vitality in its veins, and these, according to Kasravi, are its prefixes (pishvand) and suffixes (pasvand). The Eastern languages have evolved in two ways: firstly by the compounding of words, and secondly by the addition of prefixes and suffixes to them. In these ways vocabulary can be increased. Sometimes two words, each with its own meaning, are compounded to form a third word with a new meaning. For instance the word ráh (road) can be compounded with other words to form new words such as: bi-ráh (misled), gom-ráh (lost), ráh-zan (bandit), ráh-bar (leader), ráh-shenás (road expert), ráh-namá (guide), ráh-row (passage), ráh-var (easy going), ráh-namun (guide), Sháh-ráh (main road), ráh-ávard (present brought back from a journey), sar be-ráh (docile), chahár-ráh (cross roads), ráh-sepár (bound for), ráh-gozar (passer-by). The disease which has injured Persian and held back its progress is corruption with Arabic, and the treatment will depend on study of the meanings and origins of the Persian prefixes and suffixes. Cure by means of prefixes and suffixes will after a short time free the Persian language from the need to use Arabic words, or words from any other language.

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1. Kasravi, Káfnámeh, edited by Yahyá Zoká, Tehran 1331/1952.

As regards the history of Persian suffixes, many words end with the letter h (há), which in the spoken language is not pronounced at all, but in the written language has to be written: e.g. reshteh (string), jáneh (garment), náneh (letter), sáneh (shadow), fereshteh (angel). In the Pahlavi language, which was the native language of the Iranians during the Ashkánid (Parthian) and Sásánid periods, instead of h the letter k was used. This is proved by a passage from the Kárnámak-e Ardashir Bábakán,<sup>1</sup> which Kasravi quotes, containing the two words rak and do-gának, today pronounced and written rah (road), do-gáneh (two-fold). Afterwards, at the end of the Sásánid period, g was substituted for k, and later in southern Iran the g was changed to j. The fact must be borne in mind that there has always been a difference between the dialects of southern and northern Iran. Significant instances of this difference are:

1. Most northern words containing the letter shin (sh) are pronounced in the south with sin (s):<sup>2</sup> e.g. in the north they say fereshtan (to send), but in the south ferestádan.
2. Instead of the letter ze (z), dal (d) is used in southern Iran, and this difference is also seen in the oldest Persian dialects and in the Jewish Persian of Hamadán: e.g. in the south they say dámád (son-in-law) and in the north

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1. Kasravi (tr.), Kárnámak-e Ardashir Bábakán, Tehran 1341/1964, p.22.

2. Káfnameh, p.6.

zuma.

3. <sup>1</sup>Most northern words beginning with gáf (g) change to jim (j) in the south: e.g. Gahrám, the name of a village in the north, becomes Jahrom, the name of a town in the south. On the other hand, the Arabs, who were in close touch with the Persians through the centuries, replaced the gáf with either qáf (q) or jim. They had to do this because there is no letter for g in the Arabic alphabet: e.g. Khandaq (trench) from Persian Kandeh (dug), firuzaj (turquoise) from Persian firuzeh. For a long time these northern and southern forms of the suffix remained unchanged, but eventually the gáf and the jim gave place to he (h) which is used today. In the old Ázari language, which was the native language of Ázarbáiján for several centuries but gradually lost its place to Turkish, there is evidence that before the final káf the long á sound (letter alef) was used. Today the káf has been dropped and only the alef is pronounced: e.g. ástáná (threshold), Astará (a town on the Caspian coast), áshkárá (manifestly). A sentence from the geography of Hamdolláh Mostowfi (1281-1349) proves this point;<sup>2</sup> he mentions a village between the Iranian Iraq and Ázarbáiján named Khunáj, and states that its inhabitants pronounced the name Khuná (its name today, Kasravi adds,<sup>3</sup> is Kághaz Konán).

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1. Káfnámeh, pp 7-10.

2. Ibid., p.8.

Very often between the noun and the suffix eh (formerly ak) a chim (ch) is inserted in modern Persian: e.g. Sarácheh (small house), daryácheh (lake); in Pahlavi, however, the letter <sup>chak</sup>~~chak~~ was inserted instead of chim. In (old) Ázari, chim (not jim) was inserted, and instead of káf, gáf was used as the suffix, while as already mentioned alef was placed before it. For example in the (old) Ázari language cháq was said instead of the suffix chak, and later was changed to juq, which today occurs frequently in names of Ázarbáijáni villages, such as Moghánjuq, Álájuq, Mahmudjuq. The suffix káf in the Persian language often has a diminutive meaning, and this is why the word chuq, which has evolved from it, is so common in Ázarbáiján; it passed from (old) Ázari into Ottoman Turkish, but is not a Turkish word as some linguists think. In the (old) Ázari language the letter chim also appears before the suffix as in yaváshcheh (somewhat slowly), balácheh (small), guycheh (green). The suffix káf did not change, however, in some words such as dastak (staff), marjomak (lentil), mardomak (pupil of the eye).

As for the meanings of the Persian suffix káf and its derivatives, two or three are commonly recognized but in fact there are many more; for even though it consists of one letter, it is attached to thousands of other Persian words, and much of the vocabulary of Persian has been built up with

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its help. Kasravi lists 18 meanings of the suffix káf and its derivatives.<sup>1</sup>

1. Diminutive:<sup>2</sup> e.g. cháhak (cess-pit), kháneh (house, diminutive of khán, inn), tashtak (basin), shahrak (small town, often used by early writers). In the Roman history books the name of one of the Ashkánid (Parthian) kings is mentioned as Phraataces (Pahlavi, Pharahatak), which is the diminutive of Farhád (name of Queen Shirin's lover in the Sháhnameh).

Chupuq, meaning the Iranian tobacco-pipe, is of Persian origin derived from chubak (little stick), even though it appears in the Diván-e Loghát ol-Tork, the dictionary of Turkish words written (in Arabic in 1077) by Mahmud ol-Káshghari. Chupuq is the Ázari form of chubak, and the word acquired its present meaning when tobacco smoking entered Iran through Ázarbáiján during the Safavid period.

2. Derogatory: e.g. nádanak (ignoramus), mardak (guy), sha'erak (rhymer), zanak (wench). The following line gives an example (from Sa'di's Golestan):

ای با اسب تیزدودله ماند      فرک گشت جان بمنزل برد

"How often has a swift running horse stayed behind! How often has a lame little donkey (kharak) carried you safely home!"<sup>3</sup>

3. Pathetic: e.g. javának (poor young fellow), faqirak (poor beggar), teflak (poor child).

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1. Kafnameh, pp 12-15.

2. Ibid., pp 12-13.

3. Ibid., p.15.

بدولفت کهای حاکم دلفروز

پس از گریه در دیراکنه روز

"After weeping, the destitute man said to her, "O heart-cheering little mother! (mámak)".<sup>1</sup>

4. Analogous: e.g. chashmak (wink), mikhak (clove), 'aqrabak (clock-hand); this use is not common today.<sup>2</sup>

5. To form adjectives (participles) from verbs: e.g. istádeh (standing), khofteh (asleep).<sup>3</sup>

6. To form nouns from adjectives: e.g. sorkhak (measles), zardak (carrot).<sup>4</sup>

7. To form nouns of instrument from verbs: e.g. námeh (letter), paymáne (measure), máleh (trowel).<sup>5</sup>

8. Onomatopoeic: e.g. ferferesh (spinning top), gharghareh (gargle), bádbádak (kite).<sup>6</sup>

9. To form verbal nouns: e.g. náleh (groan), khandeh (laughter), geryeh (weeping), muyeh (lament). This is very rare.

10. To form nouns of quantity: e.g. chekeh (dropful), dasteh (handful), changeh (fistful). This also is very rare.

11. To form (concrete) nouns from verbs: e.g. kharásheh (filings), tarásheh (shavings).<sup>7</sup>

12. Locative: e.g. tutak (mulberry plantation), bidak (willow grove), anjirak (fig orchard).<sup>8</sup>

1. Kafnameh, p.16.

2. Ibid., pp.16-22.

3. Ibid., p.22.

4. Ibid., pp.23-26.

5. Ibid., p.26.

6. Ibid., pp.27-29.

7. Ibid., p.30.

8. Ibid., p.31.

13. Possessive: e.g. seh-payeh (three-footed, tripod), seh-sáleh (three years old).

14. Adverbial: e.g. yaváshak (slowly), narmak (gently), áshkára (manifestly).

15. ~~Familiar~~ <sup>definite article.</sup> This use is not found in literary language but appears in colloquial expressions, e.g. káseh-eh-rá be-y-ár (bring the bowl).

16. Although neither modern nor ancient Persian has forms of gender, all languages have some means of differentiating between male and female, and it seems that the suffix káf was sometimes used to indicate femininity. As evidence for this, Kasravi mentions that a ruler named Shahrbán (in old Persia Khashtar-páván, which means the guardian of the city) is reported to have had a queen named Shahrbanu; this is clearly the feminine of Shahrbán, and Kasravi thinks that the feminine suffix u has been modified from the káf (i.e. from ak).<sup>1</sup>

17. Temporal: e.g. daheh (ten-day period), sadeh (century), hazāreh (millennium).

18. Miscellaneous adjectival meanings: e.g. chashmak (wink), sangak (a sort of bread baked on hot stones).<sup>2</sup>

Kasravi points out that the meanings of certain words are not yet properly understood:<sup>3</sup> e.g. siaheh (invoice),

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1. Kafnameh, p.36.

2. Ibid., p.37.

3. Ibid., pp 39-42.

jāneh (garment), khāneh (old word for pen). There is nothing to show the meaning of the part preceding the suffix. These words are very old, and in the course of the ages their original meanings have been forgotten. Kasravi draws attention to the need for objective, and not fanciful, study of the evolution of such words. He also mentions that the suffix kāf is sometimes replaced by kān or gān.<sup>1</sup> This is seen in the names of many Iranian villages and cities, e.g. Zangān (Zanjan).

In an important book called Zabān-e Pāk (Pure language),<sup>2</sup> Kasravi begins by discussing the problem of variant forms of Persian ~~stems~~, which has caused a lot of confusion. Many verbs have two forms of their ~~stems~~, and Kasravi regards this as a great defect of the Persian language.<sup>3</sup> For example, in the verb "to write" (neveshtan),<sup>4</sup> we find parts of the verb such as (mi)-nevesht (he was writing), (be)-nevis (write), neveshteh (written), (mi)-nevisad (he writes), nevisandeh (writer). Kasravi thinks that this defect ought to be remedied by forming the parts of the verb from one root only,<sup>5</sup> e.g. nevisidan (to write), (mi)-nevisid (he was writing), (be)-nevis (write), nevisideh (written). This treatment must be applied gradually, Kasravi says,<sup>6</sup> in order that the

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1. Kāfnameh, p.41.

2. Kasravi, Zabān-e Pāk, Tehran 1323/1944.

3. Ibid., p.12.

4. Ibid., pp. 12-13.

5. Ibid., p.13.

6. Ibid., pp. 13-14.

ears may get the habit of it.

Another serious defect of Persian is its possession of too many auxiliary verbs, most of which are quite unnecessary. Thus, instead of saying khandeh namud (he laughed), náleh kard (he groaned), zári kard (he lamented), one should say khandid, nálid, záríd. Kasravi considers that the excessive use of auxiliaries was a result of the mingling of Persian with many other languages.<sup>1</sup>

Lack of valid rules is another defect of Persian discussed by Kasravi. For centuries the Iranians have been inclined to use foreign words instead of Persian words, and the language has consequently become rather slack and inefficient. For instance, In Persian three active participles can be made from each verbal root.<sup>2</sup> e.g. juván, juvá, juyandeh (all meaning "seeker"), or ravandeh (goer), raván (flowing, also soul), ravá (permissible).

Another great difficulty is the disordered state of prefixes and suffixes. Transitivity or intransitivity of verbs also presents problems. Certain verbs in Persian are used sometimes transitively and sometimes intransitively, and this causes a lot of complication in the language. The use of the past participle with passive and active meanings is yet another source of confusion.<sup>3</sup> There is an irregular

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1. Kasravi, Zabán-e Pak, p.13.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid, p.15.

4. Ibid.

rule that the past participle may sometimes be used with an active meaning: e.g. neshasteh (seated), istádeh (stood), or in khábideh kist? (who is this sleeping man?). Kasravi thinks that instead one should say in khábandeh kist?<sup>1</sup> The only way to remove this irregularity is to use the active participle. There would be no inconvenience in saying neshinandeh (sitting), istandeh (standing), which are correct, instead of neshasteh, istádeh. Imprecision is another defect which Kasravi notes.<sup>2</sup> Many Persian words do not have a precise meaning. Thus the Iranians say divár-e kutáh (the short wall); this is incorrect, for the simple reason that kutáh (short) is ~~not~~ the opposite of deráz (long), but <sup>not</sup> the opposite of boland (high). The meaning with reference to "wall" is not "high", and one should therefore say "divar-e past" (the low wall).

It is often said that the introduction of Arabic words has enriched Persian. Kasravi replies that richness does not mean that a language is strong, and that the strength of a language does not necessarily depend on the vastness of its vocabulary. A language, he says, is like a tree, which if it is strong will be able to produce branches. Those who try to increase the vocabulary of a language by borrowing words from other languages are like persons who cut branches from trees

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1. Zabán-e Pák, p.15.

2. Ibid.

and tie them with string to a bare tree. It is also said that when two languages are related to each other, they can use each other's words; but in Kasravi's opinion such borrowing must have a limit.<sup>1</sup> Although the European languages are all related to one another, they have not opened their gates to an unlimited influx of foreign words. Admittedly the Arabs came to Iran and influenced the Persian literature and language; at the same time it must not be forgotten that Persian had an influence on Arabic. Nevertheless the two languages did not fuse. Although the Arabs after conquering Iran were influenced by the glorious Iranian civilization and culture, they protected their language from too much mixing with Persian and kept it on the whole pure. As regards the European languages, which are said to be very much intermixed, Kasravi thinks that this claim cannot be accepted, because the Western European languages have all borrowed from Latin (but not so much from each other);<sup>2</sup> that is the reason why they have a great deal of common vocabulary. Even so, if a European writer uses too many Latin words, people consider him unreasonable. In Persian, on the other hand, borrowing has been carried so far that there are Iranian villages where ninety percent of the people's vocabulary, (so Kasravi says) is found to consist of Arabic words.

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1. Zabân-e Pak, p.9.

2. Ibid., p.10.

To correct this state of affairs, Kasravi thinks that several remedies are needed:<sup>1</sup>

1. Some words of Arabic origin, such as ketáb (book), jeld (volume), do not need to be replaced, as their meanings are clear and everywhere understood; they may be allowed to remain.
2. Old Persian words can be found and brought back into use with their proper meanings; this task must be carried out gradually.
3. Words must be made capable of showing a definite meaning, which is often not the case in Persian, and incorrect usages must be eliminated; for example the use of dorost-kár (correct doer) with the meaning "honest" is wrong and should be replaced by rást-kar (right doer). Many Persian words have no clear meanings but are still used in a vague and imprecise way. Kasravi cites as an instance the word farhang, which means education;<sup>2</sup> but if somebody is asked its meaning, he will say "'elm'fazl o adab" ("science, learning and literature"), which suggests that he is puzzled!

The question arises, how have Persian words lost their meanings?<sup>3</sup> Kasravi regards this phenomenon as a great defect of the Persian language, and thinks that it was caused by the mixing of Persian with alien languages. For instance,

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1. Zabán-e Pák, pp. 11-12.

2. The word also means dictionary.

3. Zabán-e Pák, pp. 34-40.

bakhshidan originally meant "to divide", but has lost its correct meaning and today means sometimes ámorzidan ("to bless" or "to forgive") and sometimes dádan ("to give"). Many words which are today used as synonyms originally had different shades of meaning: e.g. bim, tars, and bák (all meaning "fear"). Tars, for example, means fear of damage which might befall one, and should properly be used as the contrary of omid ("hope").

Loss of the root meanings of words has gone so far that in many words the root meaning is now forgotten.<sup>1</sup> For example, people say "di-shab negarân khábideh bud" ("last night he slept worriedly"), and completely forget that negarân is a part of the verb negaristan ("to look"). The proper expression in this sentence would be bimnák ("afraid"), instead of negarân ("looking"), which he could not do when asleep.

Ambiguity in the use of words is another defect of the Persian language arising from the disappearance of old verbal forms. As Kasravi says, modern Persian suffers from a shortage of verbs.<sup>2</sup> For example, if somebody says "man farsh mi-kharam," it is not known whether he means "I buy carpets professionally," or only "I am going to buy some carpets now". In other languages these two meanings are distinguished by

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1. Zabán-3 Pák, p.21.

2. Ibid., p.34.

different tenses of the verb. In Persian also these meanings were at first distinguished, but later they became confused.<sup>1</sup>

Confusion of nearly similar meanings is another widespread phenomenon in Persian.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi mentions a number of examples, e.g. neveshtan and negáshtan. These two words are used with the identical meaning "to write". In fact negáshtan means "to paint" or "to depict", and correctly it should be used with this meaning alone. Bakhshidan and ámorzidan. As already mentioned, bakhshidan correctly means "to divide"; it ought not to be used with the meaning of ámorzidan ("to bless" or "forgive") or of dádan ("to give"). Árástan and pirástan. Both these verbs mean to "beautify", but arástan has the sense of to beautify or adorn something by adding good points to it, while pirástan means to beautify or clean something by removing dirt from it. Farmudan and goftan. Both are used with the meaning of goftan ("to say"), when correctly farmudan means only "to order". Gereftan and setándan. These two verbs, which are both used with the meaning "to get", correctly have quite different meanings: gereftan means "to seize", whereas setándan means "to acquire" (without using violence or power). Dasteh and goruh. These two words are also commonly used as synonyms. Goruh correctly means a group of people who gather somewhere without

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1. Zabán-e Pák, p.22.

2. Ibid., pp.34-40.

any special aim or purpose, while dasteh means a number of people who have some purpose in their gathering. Chandin and chandan. These two words are used synonymously to express measurement. Correctly, chandin should be used when the meaning is "that amount" (which will be mentioned), and chandan when the meaning is "that amount" (which has been mentioned.)

There are many such words in Persian, and Kasravi thinks that their use should be gradually confined to their exact meanings.<sup>1</sup> Only in a pure language, he says, is each word used for a single meaning, and each meaning expressed by a single word. Those who think that the existence of large numbers of synonyms in a language is a sign of its strength are terribly mistaken. Such persons want merely to play with different words; but a language is an instrument for mutual understanding and exchanging ideas so that the business of life may be carried on.

Prefixes and Suffixes. Apart from the already mentioned defects, the Persian language is restricted in scope. A much wider practical vocabulary is needed. Kasravi envisages two ways of achieving this purpose.<sup>2</sup>

1. Compounding two or three words together and getting a new meaning from the compound.

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1. Zaban-e Pak, p.39.

2. Ibid., p.40.

2. Adding prefixes and suffixes to words. This is a particularly helpful method, by which thousands of words with new meanings can be created: e.g. pas-raftan (to decline), pish-raft (progress), nik-andish or nik-khwáh (benevolent), bad-andish or bad-khwáh (malevolent) and so on.

There are a great number of prefixes and suffixes in Persian; but as Kasragi points out, they are often wrongly used or ambiguous.<sup>1</sup>

1. Some of them are not systematically used; for example it is possible to say sud-mand (profitable), but the contrary ziyán-mand is seldom used.

2. Many of them have different meanings: e.g. nák and dardnák (painful - thing) and kheshmnák (angry - person).

3. Some of them have no clear meaning: e.g. fará ámad, fará rasid.

If the best possible use is to be made of the Persian prefixes and suffixes, these defects must be eliminated.

How can the Persian language be made stronger and more expressive? In his book on this subject,<sup>2</sup> Kasravi mentions that before the Constitutional movement in Iran, murmurs were heard about the need for purifying the Persian language, and that after the revolution, articles on this subject began

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1. Zabán-e Pák, pp 40-41.

2. Kasravi, Zabán-e Fārsi va Rāh-e rasá va Taváná gardánidan-e an, edited by Yahya Zoka, Tehran 1335/1956, pp 1-2.

to appear in the newspapers. Until Kasravi's time, however, nobody had done any significant research into the language for the purpose of finding genuinely Persian words with which the borrowed Arab words might be replaced. Kasravi remarks that some prejudiced persons, who attributed the defects of Persian to the Arab conquest, were strictly against Islam and the Arabs; while on the other hand there were many who had studied Arabic and had become so attached to it that they were not ready to give up their heavy Arabized style of writing Persian. They even urged the people to use Arabic words as much as possible. The result, Kasravi observes, is that several styles of writing Persian have come into being.<sup>1</sup> In newspapers, for instance, different articles are often written in completely different styles.

Kasravi points out that in spite of the spread of Islam in Iran, there was no historical connection between this development and the corruption of the Persian language through excessive borrowing of Arabic words.<sup>2</sup> The latter process was started by ignorant and shallow-minded persons long after the Iranians had become Moslems (as can be seen from the purity of the language used by the earlier Persian writers of the Moslem period.) According to Kasravi, a language must be independent if it is to survive;<sup>3</sup> otherwise

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1. Zabân-e Fârsi, p.12.

2. Ibid., pp.1-9.

3. Ibid., p.7.

it can become so dependent on foreign words that it will soon die a natural death. The Persian language, he thinks, is now suffering from such a lack of independence. He compares languages with countries, and says that just as the people of a country must not let strangers get control of it, they must not let them get control of their language either.<sup>1</sup> If Persian is to be saved and improved, it must be freed from the domination of Arabic grammar and vocabulary. Today, for a good knowledge of Persian, Arabic grammar has to be learnt; and this causes a lot of trouble and waste of time. Kasravi thinks that the Ministry of Education ought to assume responsibility for improving this situation.<sup>2</sup> The first steps should be taken in the primary school programme.

Kasravi acknowledges that the majority of living languages are impure,<sup>3</sup> being mixtures of two and often three different languages; but even so he insists that there should be some limit and that every language should gradually be made independent. He mentions the names of certain learned persons who allowed themselves to write Persian in a heavy style, using unlimited numbers of Arabic words and often also sentences. One of them was the illustrious scholar Mirzá Mohammad Qazvini<sup>4</sup> (1877-1949). At the same time Kasravi

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1. Zabán-e Fārsi, p.5.

2. Ibid., p.6.

3. Ibid.,

4. Ibid., p.10.

recognises that at this stage it is impossible to remove all the Arabic words from Persian.<sup>1</sup> Some of them are now very useful in daily conversation, and the people are attached to them. They can therefore be left as they are. Moreover, purification of a language is not an easy task. It must definitely be undertaken by learned scholars, and it will require concentrated effort and take a long time. Those responsible cannot be allowed to create words out of their own minds; they must first have a sound knowledge of the meanings and use of words. In the sentence Khāneh tamāman sukhteh ("the house is completely burnt"), the use of the Arabic word tamāman ("completely") is, in Kasravi's opinion, incorrect.<sup>2</sup> One should search for a suitable Persian word; and the proper word can usually be found in the classical literary works such as Sa'di's Golestān. Sa'di used the word pāk ("clean") in the sense of "completely", and the modern Iranians could adopt it instead of tamāman. Kasravi mentions certain classical works which he regards as particularly valuable sources of pure Persian words,<sup>3</sup> namely the writings of Nāser Khosraw, Bayhaqi's history, the Fārsnāme of Ebn ol-Balkhi, Sa'di's Golestān, the Asrār ol-Towhid, and above all Ferdowsi's Shāhnāme. He repeatedly emphasizes Ferdowsi's greatness<sup>4</sup> both as a great scholar and as a poet,

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1. Zabān-e Fārsi, p.4.

2. Ibid., p.15.

3. Ibid., p.19.

4. Ibid., p.18.

and praises him because he avoided using too many Arabic words. As regards the writers who lived under the Mongol dynasty, and shortly before that time, Kasravi divides them into two groups.<sup>1</sup> One group actually tried to increase the number of Arabic words in Persian: e.g. the historians Vassáf (early 14th century) and Jovayni (d.1229/1230), and Nasrolláh Káteb (Nasrolláh ebn 'Abdól-Hamid; mid 12th century), the translator of the celebrated animal fables Kalileh va Demneh.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi has a very low opinion of these authors. The second group, although they were attached to Arabic, also used a rich vocabulary of Persian words. Among their works, Kasravi notes two as being very useful sources of Persian words.<sup>3</sup> One of them is the Asrár ol-Towhid fi Maqámát ol-Shaykh Abu Sa'id; this book is a biography of the celebrated Sufi saint Abu Sa'id Abu'l-Khayr (967-1049) written in a very simple style by his great grandson Mohammad towards the end of the 12th century. Kasravi thinks that perhaps the reason for its simplicity is that the Sufis were very simple people in their way of life and mutual dealings, and that this simplicity is reflected in their style of writing.<sup>4</sup> If this book is compared with the Kalileh va Demneh of Nasrolláh Káteb, their styles appear entirely different, even though the two authors lived

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1. Zabán-e Fârsi, p.18.

2. Ibid., pp 12-13.

3. Ibid., p.19.

4. Ibid., p.19.

at nearly the same time; Nasrollāh's work is very superficial and heavy. Another book from this period which provides a useful store of Persian vocabulary is Sa'di's Golestān.

Kasravi points out that Persian could be one of the easiest languages to learn, and could also be a lucid means of expression,<sup>1</sup> however much Europeans may allege that Asiatic languages are not clear in meaning. While recognising that some people will disagree with the conclusions which he has drawn from his researches into the Persian language, Kasravi concludes by assuring his readers that he has tried to do his best.

Mohammad Qazvini (1877-1949), the founder of modern Iranian literary and historical scholarship, who was a close friend of Professor E. G. Browne, admired Kasravi as a linguistic scholar but not as a language reformer. In his book Bist Maqaleh-ye Qazvini<sup>2</sup>, he praises Kasravi's book Ázari for its trustworthy research and precise information. Kasravi has shown on the basis of historical facts how Turkish came to Ázarbáiján and how the people gave up their native Ázari Persian language for Turkish. Early Arab geographers such as Ebn Howqal and Mas'udi mention the existence of Ázari, and from their statements it was possible to

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1. Zabán-e Fārsi, p.19.

2. Bist Maqaleh-ye Qazvini, Bombay 1306/1928, pp 141-145.

infer that it was the spoken language of Ázarbáiján from the 4th/9th to 7th/12th centuries and that it was Persian; but their information was so scarce that these inferences were based on probability rather than certainty. The question what language the people of Ázarbáiján originally spoke was not an urgent problem, and no scholars before Kasravi paid attention to it. Recently some ignorant and ill-informed persons had attributed a different nationality to the Ázarbáijánis because they converse in Turkish. Their arguments had been disproved by the precise arguments which Kasravi had gathered from so many sources and presented in such a logical way. From both the historical and the political viewpoints Kasravi had performed a most valuable service. At the end of this article Qazvini touches on Kasravi's style. It is unpopular with Iranian readers, he says, because it is practically unintelligible to them. Consequently they cannot grasp the ideas in Kasravi's valuable works such as his book Ázari. Kasravi did not write either in the old-fashioned style, like the Násekh ol-Tavárikh,<sup>1</sup> nor in pure Persian, like the Nomeh-ye Khosrovan,<sup>2</sup> but tried to create a unique style of his own combining traditional pure Persian words and modern words. He did not realize that the

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1. A chronicle of the Qájárs and history of the Emáms by Mohammad Taqi Sepehr (d.1880), who was court historian to Naser ol-Din Shah.
  2. A history of Iran up to the Zands, written in 1891-1894 by Jalal ol-Din Mirza, a son of Fath 'Ali Shah. It contains no Arabic words.

result would look strange and unnatural. Qazvini then states that he once came across a book called Qahveh-khāneh-ye Surat(?)<sup>1</sup> by Bernardin de Saint Pierre<sup>2</sup>, which had been translated by Kasravi from Esperanto into the most beautiful Arabic. Only by reading this book can one appreciate the extent of proficiency in Arabic. In conclusion, Qazvini<sup>2</sup> asks why a great scholar like Kasravi, whose valuable researches had drawn the attention of the world of learning, should be so indifferent and unsympathetic to the language and literature of his own fatherland.

A number of articles by various authors were written on the subject of defects in the Persian language and possible remedies, and were published in the newspapers and periodicals. It seems worthwhile to mention one of them at this point, because its ideas are similar to Kasravi's. This is an article by the distinguished scholar 'Abbās Eqbāl (Ashtiyāni) (d.1334/1955) entitled "Language Policy," which was published in the periodical Yadgar<sup>3</sup>. In this he says that there have been times when the Persian language was understood from China and India to Albania, and was the language of literature and business in many countries. As the Iranian central government lost its stability through the centuries, the influence of the Persian language greatly

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1. Bist Maqāleh-ye Qasvini, pp 147-148.

2. 1737-1814. Author of the very popular novel Paul et Virginie, which has been translated into most languages.

3. Yadgar, year 2, No.6, 1329/1946, pp 1-7.

decreased. If the nation wants to survive, it must have a language policy. If Iran fails in this matter and the Persian language dies, the nation will also die. Two dangers threaten Persian at present. Firstly, if a powerful European nation were to defeat Iran and become politically dominant, they would naturally spread their language in the country, and the Persian language would finally be eliminated for ever. Secondly, European governments (so 'Abbás Eqbál says) are trying for their own purposes to destroy our glorious language, and to replace it by local languages or dialects.<sup>1</sup> Iranian must realise that Persian is their state language (zabán-e dowlati) and the means of expression of their learned scholars and men of letters. Iranian governmental leaders should try to spread the Persian language in the territories which once belonged to Iran, and whose inhabitants are still attracted towards Iran, because they have kept similar traditions and spiritual and mental attitudes. Needless to say the governmental authorities are responsible for the further development of the Persian language. There cannot, however, be any question of removing the Turkish and Arabic languages from the country. The government should try to maintain a very tolerant policy towards the Iranians who remain attached to those two languages. The main purpose of the government's

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1. Yádgár, year 2, No.6, 1324/1946, pp 1-7. He probably referred to the Soviet government's policy in Iranian Azarbaijan during and after the Second World War, and perhaps also to their policies in Caucasian Azarbaijan and Central Asia.

policy should be to encourage them to stay Iranian, to think Iranian, and to have Iranian sympathies. In that case it will not be important if a minority of Iranians speak Arabic or Turkish. As Háfēz says:

یکی است ترکی و تازی در این معامله حافظ  
حدیث عشق بیان کن به زبان که تو دراهی

"Arabic and Turkish in this matter are just the same.  
O Hafez, tell the tale of love in whatever language you know."<sup>1</sup>

There had been a rumour that Ázarbáiján might be separated from the rest of the country because its inhabitants speak Turkish.<sup>2</sup> Foreign powers had been trying to promote separatism among the Ázarbáijánis and Kurds by spreading wrong ideas among them. The Iranians, 'Abbás Eqbál says, must firstly realize that in most cases there is no connection at all between people's language and their race. There is always a possibility that a nation's language may be changed by political or historical developments. For instance English is the language of about two hundred million people in the world. Originally it was a Germanic language; two German tribes, the Angles and the Saxons, conquered England and ruled for a period of time during which they spread their language amongst the people. There are still people in Great Britain, however, who speak different languages, such as

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1. Yadgar, year 2, No.3, 1324/1945, pp 1-12.

2. Ibid.

Welsh and Gaelic. Switzerland also is a good example in this respect. Although three different languages are spoken in that country, the Swiss are ruled by one government, and they are all equally ready to defend their country.

If a few insincere persons insist on attributing to Ázarbáiján a different nationality and considering the Ázarbáijánis a different race, or in saying that the Ázarbáijánis were once ruled by Turks and that Turkish is their language, we can always ask why they have named their villages and rivers in pure Persian. This alone is enough to convince a reasonable mind that the Ázarbáijánis are Aryans, who accidentally adopted the language of the Turks. Yáqut ol-Hamavi in his Mo'jam ol-Boldán has left a record of the pure Persian names of the villages of that Iranian province seven hundred years ago; and even today we very seldom come across a Turkish village name. 'Abbás Eqbál is quite sure that the majority of Ázarbáijánis are of pure Aryan race, with hardly any Turk or Mongol blood in their veins. No doubt there was a minority of Turks, such as the Turkeṁans, Taymuris, Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu; but as their numbers were limited, they were very soon absorbed by the local Iranians. The language of literature and poetry in Ázarbáiján has always been Persian. Large numbers of scholars from

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1. Mo'jam ol-Boldán, vol. I, pp. 1-12.

Ázarbáiján have written books in Persian. The (Old) Ázari language of Ázarbáiján was a Persian dialect. 'Abbás Eqbál praises Kasravi's remarkable achievement in his research into the Ázari language.

'Abbás Eqbál in another article says that he had found proof of (Old) Ázari's having been the language of Ázarbáiján before Turkish in a Resáleh by an author named Ruhi Anárjání, about whom nothing is known.<sup>1</sup> In one part of this Resáleh the author speaks about the governors and rulers of Ázarbáiján, and this part is all in Ázari. According to 'Abbás Eqbál, Old Ázari became extinct from the middle of the 8th century A.H./14th century A.D.

'~~Aqa~~ Bozorg 'Alavi, the well-known novelist and scholar <sup>(Communist-party)</sup> who was one of the founders of the Tudeh and now lives in East Berlin, also has a high opinion of Kasravi as a scholar and language reformer. Kasravi, he writes, was one of the most diligent and profound Iranian scholars. Except for a few political and religious controversial pamphlets, his works are almost all of great importance for the history of Iran and its literature.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi maintained that a language mirrors the understanding and thinking of a people, and that the defects of Persian can only be corrected by scholarly

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1. Yádgár, year 2, No.3, 1324/1945, pp 1-12.

2. Bozorg 'Alavi, Geschichte und Entwicklung der modernen Persischen Literatur, p.178.

means and not by new inventions. Bozorg 'Alavi emphasizes that Kasravi was not alone in his aim of purifying Persian from Arabic; he mentions an influential Zoroastrian deputy who wanted to rename the Majles (Parliament) Kangáshestán.<sup>1</sup> The movement was strongly supported by generals close to Rezá Sháh; and Kasravi, together with the playwright Zabih Behruz,<sup>2</sup> was appointed to the commission which persianized the technical terms and names of ranks in the Iranian armed forces.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Mahdi Mojtahedi, in his book on Outstanding Ázar-báijánis during the Constitutional Struggle,<sup>4</sup> praises Kasravi's researches in the field of language for their trustworthiness. He considers that Kasravi's book Ázari is a remarkable piece of research. On the other hand he thinks that Kasravi made a mistake when he invented new words for the purpose of purifying Persian, and he finds Kasravi's style of writing silly and tiring.

In 1314/1935, Rezá Sháh's Minister of Education, Dr. 'Ali Asghar Hekmat, set up the Farhangestán (Iranian Academy), whose main purpose was to compile a dictionary which would contain new words needed for new purposes or in replacement of Arabic words. This step meant that the government accepted

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1. Bozorg 'Alavi, Geschichte und Entwicklung... pp 182-183.
  2. Author of the popular play Ja'far Khan az Farang amadeh and of the popular children's plays Shah-e Iran va Banu-v-e Arman and Jijak 'Ali Shah. Zabih Behruz studied at Cambridge with Professor E.G. Browne. He was born in 1911.
  3. Bozorg 'Alavi, Geschichte und Entwicklung, p.183.
  4. Mahdi Mojtahedi, Rejal-e Azarbaijan dar 'Asr-e Mashrutiat, Tehran, 1327/1948, pp 130-131.

Kasravi's views on language policy. Kasravi himself, however, did not become a member of the Farhangestán. Some of the new words accepted by the Farhangestán were artificial or even ridiculous, and some writers such as Dr. Fakhr ol-Din Shádman in his book Taskhir-e Tamaddon-e Farangi (Tehran, 1326/1947) have made jokes about them; but in general, the Farhangestán did not exaggerate too much, not nearly so much as the corresponding body Türk Dil Kurumu (Turkish Language Association) in Turkey. This was thanks to the moderation of its chairman Mohammad 'Ali Forughí (1878/1942), who was a distinguished scholar and twice Prime Minister (in 1926 and 1941).

Another of those who criticized the views of Kasravi and the language reformers in the Farhangestán was a certain Hushang Henávi<sup>(1)(a)</sup>, who wrote that the Farhangestán had not been able to register any significant achievements.<sup>1</sup> If anyone were to follow the Farhangestán in his style of writing, presumably no European orientalist would be able to understand very many of his words.

Another critic was Sayyed Hasan Taqizádeh, the great Constitutionalist leader and scholar.<sup>2</sup> In 1326/1948 he made a speech to representative teachers about the necessity of safeguarding the expressiveness of the Persian language. He opposed the removal of Arabic words from Persian, on the ground

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1. Yadgar, year 5, No.1-2, 1327/1948, pp 9-11.

2. Yadgar, year 5, No.6, 1326/1948, pp 1-40.

(1a). Hushang Hanavi is a pseudonym sometimes used by Dr. Fakhr ol-Din Shádman a writer who is well-known for his book Taskhir-e Tamaddon-e Farangi (Overcoming Western civilization)

that Persian literature depends on Arabic words. Moreover the Persian language has been mixed with many other languages such as Armenian and Turkish, and has taken words from them. "The linguists", he says "do not attempt to abolish those languages; instead they seek to spoil the structure of our own language by removing its Arabic words. If everybody were to treat Persian in this way, our language would become one of the poorest in the world. Persian was not a strong language before the Arab conquest."

Dr. P. N. Khānlari, in his book on Linguistics and the Persian Language,<sup>1</sup> criticizes Kasravi's work in this field, without specifically mentioning Kasravi by name. He shows clearly that he does not regard Kasravi as having been a scientific linguist and does not see any justification for his attempts to purify Persian from Arabic and other foreign words. Dr. Khānlari thinks that Kasravi used the method of analogy. The laws and grammar of any language, however, are based upon its use in daily conversation; we cannot possibly build the grammar before the language. Dr. Khānlari says that although Kasravi was convinced that he was the most intelligent man in the world of learning, he never realized that there is no perfect language in the world. The world's great progressive nations have not been able to remove the

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1. Dr. Parviz Nātel Khānlari, Zabānshenāsi va Zabān-e Fārsi, Tehran, 1343/1964, pp 182-183. (Payk-e Iran publications).

deficiencies of their languages, which contain numerous irregularities. This was one of the reasons which caused Dr. Zamenhof, who was a great scholar, to invent Esperanto as an international language; but the nations have not shown much enthusiasm for learning it.

Kasravi was not a man who shrank from practising what he preached. In his own writings he used words of pure Persian origin and words of his own invention compounded from pure Persian roots. He obtained these not only from the early classics such as Ferdowsi's Shāhnāme and Sa'ādi's Bustān but also sometimes from Pahlavi. As a result, a good deal of what he wrote is not fully intelligible to most Iranians. The reader must get help from a "Dictionary of Kasravi" (Farhang-e Kasravi) composed by his devoted follower Yahyā Zokā and published at Tehran in 1326/1947. Because of this, Kasravi's way of writing is disliked by many people and his books are less widely read than they might have been otherwise. In other respects he did much to improve the precision of modern Persian writing. The characteristics of his style may be summarized as follows:

1. Avoidance of repetitive synonyms.
  2. Minimum use of ~~participles~~ (vasfi) verbs.
  3. Minimum use of ~~compound~~ verbs.
  4. Use of each word with a definite meaning.
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5. Use of short single-verb sentences.
6. Clarity of meaning.
7. Avoidance of rhythmic phrases and other literary devices.
8. Occasional illustration of ideas through proverbs or short stories.
9. Avoidance of too many repetitive sentences expressing the same idea.
10. Accurate terminology even at the expense of literary elegance.
11. Going straight into the subject without a long preamble.
12. Use of Persian grammar even with words of foreign origin.

Today, most though by no means all Iranians hold the same views as Kasravi did about the need for brevity and precision in Persian prose. His influence would have been greater if people had not been repelled by the peculiar words which he used; e.g. akhshej (for Zedd) "against", áyoft (for ehtiaj) "need". On the other hand, some of his words are now widely understood, even if they are not in general use; e.g. vázheh (word) instead of kalemeh, ák (fault) instead of áyb, báhámád (association) for jamiát. The acceptable words are mostly those which Kasravi took and revived from Ferdowsi's Sháhnámeh and Sa'di's Bustán.

On the other hand, Kasravi's linguistic theories incurred the disapproval of an opponent named Náser Makárem Shirázi,

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who was particularly critical of Kasravi's style of writing.<sup>1</sup> He said that Kasravi used so many unfamiliar words in his writings that people could not understand his meaning.

Kasravi in his book Zaban-e Pák also discusses an idea which busied the minds of many people, especially in the last century, namely the creation of a universal language.<sup>2</sup> A great deal of effort has been made in this field, but no positive result has been achieved. Today with new inventions and easier travelling, the remotest parts of the world are in touch with one another. Indeed the world has become a small place. The maintenance of so many different ways of speaking is consequently rather unwise. According to the researches of the linguists (so Kasravi says),<sup>3</sup> we cannot choose one of the present languages as a universal one, because it would be difficult to learn and would need too much time and concentration to be readily used. For this reason a number of linguists tried to create a new language. Dr. Zamenhof, a Polish linguist, invented Esperanto,<sup>4</sup> which is very easy to learn; for an average person three months would be enough. Although Esperanto is so easy, it has not made much progress, and Dr. Zamenhof's hope has not been fulfilled. His researches showed that a language only becomes difficult

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1. <sup>In</sup> Dar Pásokh-e Kasravián, Tehran 1335/1966, El Davati, pp 11-12.

2. Zaban-e Pák, pp 61-64.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.77.

through disorderliness; when a language is correctly formed, in keeping with its own rules, it will not be difficult. "If we could put the Persian language in order," Kasravi continues, "and clean it of unnecessary complications, it would be one of the easiest in the world. Although Esperanto was introduced into all countries, interest in it soon died down, even after the first world war when the League of Nations attempted unsuccessfully to spread it. We should recognise that a language becomes international and universal through its literature. Fortunately Persian is a very rich language from the literary point of view; moreover, when it is spoken properly, it sounds very sweet and melodious. So there is hope for better appreciation of its merits in the future."

## CHAPTER FOUR

### KASRAVI'S LITERARY STUDIES

Kasravi also did research in the field of literature, and wrote books in which he criticized Persian poetry.<sup>1</sup> It is important to understand what he means by literature. The word used in Persian for literature, adab, is of Arabic origin. Among the Arabs an adib (literary man) was a person who could speak in a highly literary and decorative way. Kasravi holds that there are two categories of words in a language. One consists of words used in a simple way in daily conversation, which form the language of the mass of the people. The other consists of decorative words used in order to make the writers and orators seem more impressive, as can be seen in some examples of poetry. For instance there is a short saying attributed to the Emám 'Ali,

لَا تَكُنْ حُلُوءًا فَتَكُوكُلَ وَلَا تَكُنْ دُرًّا فَتَلْفُظَ

which means (in Arabic) "do not be sweet or you will be eaten, and do not be bitter, or you will be spat out." This sentence has come to be regarded as a proverb. It is a very firm and beautiful combination of words, and one can appreciate its meaning. In the early days of Islam, a great

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1. In his book Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, Tehran 1323/1944, and in other books and articles.

2. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, pp 2-3.

number of people tried to follow the Qor'án and the Holy Prophet in producing short but meaningful sentences, and one can easily see that in those days people were always simple in their descriptions. Gradually, however, their successors began to give a heavy appearance to their sayings and writings. They started to play with words, leaving behind them thousands of useless volumes of poetry. Although poets of this type were very popular in their own time, Kasravi classes them as parasites and gives them no credit whatsoever. He<sup>1</sup> thinks that their works are valueless, and that although the contemporary society was very much influenced by them, it did not gain any benefit from them. He<sup>2</sup> especially criticizes poets who were attached to royal courts and whose poetry is chiefly concerned with praising kings.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of the Constitutional movement in Iran, the mass of the people did not pay much attention to such poets; but after a few years a movement to spread the study of poetry sprang up. As a first step, poetry was put into the school programme as a basic subject. Kasravi<sup>4</sup> says that in the western world literature means the language of the masses, and that if one wants to know about a western country's way of life and traditions, one

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, p.5.

2. Ibid., pp 6-9.

3. Ibid., p.10.

4. Ibid., pp 12-13.

can get a general idea through its literature. But in Iran literature does not have the same meaning. For example, one will not get any idea of mediæval Iranian life from reading the divān (collection of poems) of Anvari (d. 1189 or 1191), the celebrated court poet of the Saljuq Soltān Sanjar. Kasravi<sup>1</sup> is convinced that one of the many reasons for the backwardness of the Iranians in past and present times has been their attachment to poisonous poetry books. Through the centuries the nation, and especially the young generation, has been too much preoccupied with poetry.

Kasravi's views on poetry and literature may be concisely summarized as follows:

1. Amongst the early Arabs, adab meant a decorative way of speaking and writing which in itself was quite harmless.<sup>2</sup>
2. Some later Arab writers lost all simplicity in their writing and merely played with words. Kasravi regards such writings as quite worthless.
3. Adab came to Iran in this worthless form.<sup>3</sup>
4. "Disloyal" Iranians spread the taste for worthless literature and harmful poetry among their compatriots.<sup>4</sup>
5. In modern times, Iranian "traitors" conspired with

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1. Dar Payrāmūn-e Adabiat, p.15.

2. Ibid., p.18.

3. Ibid., p.19.

4. Ibid., p. 20.

European orientalists to dig up more and more poets from the past and to spread even further the taste for poetry and poetical ideas.<sup>1</sup>

Kasravi<sup>2</sup> often points out that he felt no hostility towards Iranian poets as such; but he emphasizes that poetry is a kind of speech, and every sort of speech should have a purpose. A majority of the poets neglected the needs of poetry, and merely combined rhythmic words into lines of verse whenever they felt in the mood to do so. Furthermore they debased the Persian language by praising the kings and rulers of their time. In one place Kasravi<sup>3</sup> says: "I must admit that poetry is the language of feelings. But in Iran just the opposite of this has been witnessed. Dishonest persons, by spreading poisonous poetry books, have been able to impress the mind of the young generation. Their energies and abilities ought to have been spent usefully instead." Kasravi<sup>4</sup> thinks that another objectionable feature of the works of Persian poets is their exaggerated praise of wine.

In a speech to a literary society (Anjoman-e Adabi),<sup>5</sup> Kasravi said that young people should not waste their time in useless ways. The world's events follow one another, and when nations go . . . . .

1. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, p.19.

2. Ibid., p.20.

3. Ibid.

4. Háfez cheh mi-guyad, Tehran 1326/1947, p.5.

5. Sokhanráni-ye Kasravi dar Anjoman-e Adabi, yá Goftári az Paymán, published at Tehran 1344/1965, p.19.

down and remain in degradation, this is because of their involvement in useless activities. "I can",<sup>1</sup> he continues, "fully appreciate those poets who tried to avoid writing useless poetry, but instead wrote their books with the aim of leading and guiding society to a better way of living; they tried to teach morality, and also a sense of humour. Unfortunately the number of them is very limited."

In Kasravi's<sup>2</sup> opinion, the Shāhnāme of Ferdowsi (d.1020) is a good example of useful poetry, and one of the great masterpieces of the world's literature. Ferdowsi's chief intention, Kasravi thinks,<sup>3</sup> was to produce a book which would stir the nation to patriotism. He also rendered a most valuable service to the Persian language by writing the Shāhnāme at a time when the language was in danger of dying out, and by avoiding the use of too many heavy indigestible Arabic words. Kasravi goes on to say; "I have<sup>4</sup> accepted the view that literature is the language of the masses. In that case it should express the feelings of the masses and describe their affairs. During the Mongol Conquest, the Iranians were living in a miserable condition;

1. Dar Payrāmūn-e Adabiāt, p.40.
2. Ibid., p.141.
3. Ibid., pp 141-142.
4. Ibid., pp 12-38.

but hardly any idea of the situation in those days can ever be got by referring to the works of the poets. The Iranian poets in those days not only neglected the masses, but became closely attached to the Mongol kings, and even began to admire them." Kasravi<sup>1</sup> says that this sort of poetry is not only harmful to read but ought even to be burnt. There are many examples of it. During the invasion of Taymur Lang, when this foreign conquerer attacked Esfahan and had a minaret built with the skulls of seventy thousand innocent people, a poet whose name is unknown wrote:<sup>2</sup>

رایت تیمور شه گدگان  
حکمش از ایوانه کیهان گذشت

چون جهان شد علم داستان  
معدنش ز آدم و حیوان گذشت

"When the flag of king Taymur Gurkân became the flag of fable in the whole world, his rule went beyond the portico of the universe; his justice went beyond all humans and animals." Kasravi<sup>3</sup> observes that this silly poet ignored Taymur's hideous cruelty, and instead of criticizing him praised him in a most absurd way. Under the Safavids and Qajars, the situation became worse<sup>and</sup>, the poets were even more extravagant in their praises of the kings. During the

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1. Dar Payramun-e Adabiât, p.51.

2. Sokhanraji-ye Kasravi dar Anjoman-e Adabi, p.31.

3. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.49.

Constitutional struggle, when there was rebellion all over Iran and the people were trying to get rid of the tyrannical autocracy, scarcely ten poets can be found who worked with the people in this great national cause.<sup>1</sup>

Kasravi's criticisms of certain famous Iranian poets are summarized below.

'Omar Khayyám. Kasravi thinks that Khayyám<sup>2</sup> was the founder of kharábátigari, "the cult of the tavern." He cared about nothing in this world, and denied the value of life and everything connected with it. Throughout his poetry we often come across his questions "Where do we come from?" "Where are we going?" and his advice "Do not think about the future, drink wine and think only about the present moment." This is one part of Khayyám's philosophy. In Kasravi's<sup>3</sup> opinion, Khayyám made a terrible mistake, and completely misinterpreted the world when he denied human free will and maintained that every person has a destiny written and arranged by God, which no human being is capable of changing. Thus Khayyám says:

ای بی خبر این طاق مجسم هیچ است  
 این طاقم نه سپهر لرزم هیچ است  
 خوش باش که در شین کون و فساد  
 وابسته یک دیم و آن هم هیچ است

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1. Kasravi's criticism is unjust, because many famous poets of modern Iran such as Bahar, 'Eshqi, and 'Aref Qazvini, championed the Constitutional cause in their poems.
  2. Hakim 'Omar ebn Ebrahim Khayyám (or Khayyámi) of Nishápur, 1048-1123.
  3. Dar Payramun-e Adabiát, p.40.

"O uninform, this sculptured arch is nothing, this nine-skyed figured vault is nothing. Be merry, for in the abode of being and decaying, we are tied to one moment, and that too is nothing."<sup>1</sup>

امروز تو را دسترس فردا نیست  
و از پیش فردا تا بجز خود نیست  
ضایع مکن این دلم را در دلت شیدا نیست  
کاین باقی عمر را بقاییدار نیست

"Today you have no power over tomorrow, and anxiety about tomorrow only brings you melancholy. Waste not this moment, unless your heart is distraught; for there is nothing to show that the rest of your life will last long."<sup>2</sup>

با باده نشین که ملک محمود این است  
وز چنگ نشند که لمن را در این است  
از ناصبه و رفقه دگر یاد مکن  
حالی خدش باش ز آنکه مقصود این است

"Sit with your wine, for this is Mahmud's empire, and listen to the harp, for this is David's tune. Stop thinking of what has not come and of what has gone. Be merry right now, for that is the purpose."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Dar Payrāmun-e Adabiāt, p.45.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

زین پیش نشان بود نیز بود دست  
 بیدسته قلم ز نیک و بد ناسوره است  
 تقدیر تو راه را نیم بایت بیداد  
 نیم هردون و کوشیدن ما بیهوده است  
 "Long before now what is to be has been marked down for ever.

The pen writes tirelessly of good and bad. Destiny gave you whatever had to be given; our grief and our efforts are vain."<sup>1</sup>

This was the wort of lesson which Khayyám taught to society.<sup>2</sup> In Kasravi's opinion,<sup>3</sup> it is, in the first place, shameful to say that this world is valueless; and while it is true to say that we did not come into this world of our own free will, that is a very poor excuse for indifference towards life. God armed us with the gifts of freedom of choice and reason. Secondly, Khayyám was fond of wine and composed a great number of verses about it. Finally Khayyám minimized human free will and persistently argued that all events in the world are predestined and decided by God and cannot in anyway be changed or influenced by human beings. Kasravi admits that Khayyám's poetry is very pleasant and beautiful,<sup>4</sup> but considers its meanings very harmful. Here again, as so often elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> Kasravi reiterates that the Iranians were defeated with wrong doctrines, such as Sufigari (the cult of mysticism) and Bátenigari (the cult

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, p.46.

2. Ibid., p.46.

3. Ibid., p.44.

4. Ibid., p.76.

5. Sokhanrání-ye Kasravi dar Anjomane Adabi, pp 26-28.

of the hidden meaning, especially among the Esmá'ilites). He thinks that the influence of ideas of this sort on the people's minds caused them to lose their manliness and courage. They consequently failed to put up any defence against the uncivilized Mongol barbarians. Kasravi<sup>1</sup> also thinks that Europeans praise Khayyám's quatrains because they want to keep the Iranian people preoccupied with poetry such as this, and thereby take advantage to exploit them. He says that if a poet like Khayyám were to start producing similar poetry in a country like England<sup>2</sup> and teaching laziness in the same way to the young people in that country, the English leaders would certainly throttle him.

X Sa'di.<sup>3</sup> Kasravi remarks that although Sa'di is supposed to have been a strict Moslem, he was always very interested in the mystic cult (Sufigari) and was really no better than Khayyám. Sa'di toyed with all aspects of life, without having any knowledge of them. He wrote verses on many different subjects, including politics, theology and culture. Kasravi observes that Sa'di, who lived during the Mongol conquest, never tried to warn the Iranian people about the realities of their position, but instead persuaded them to remain silent. He himself accepted employment in

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1. Dar Payrámun-e She'r o Shá'eri, pp 48-51.

2. Dar Payramun-e Adabiat, p.51.

3. Shaykh Mosleh ol-Din Sa'di of Shiráz, d.1291.

the Mongols' service. He was also one of the most persistent of the poets who repeated the idea of man's inability to change this world. For instant he says:

جهان بر آب نهاده است و آدمی بر باد  
غلام هست آنم که دل براد تنهار

"He has based the world on water and man on wind. I am in bondage to the purpose of Him, who has not set his heart on mankind and this world."<sup>1</sup>

شب هر تو انگری بسرائی همی رود  
در دیش هر کجا که شب آید سرائی دوست

"The rich man goes at night to his home; wherever night falls, there is the poor man's home."<sup>2</sup>

چو رخت از مملکت بر بست فداهی  
سگدانی بهتر است از پادشاهی

"If you wish to cast off the cares of state, begging is better than kingship."<sup>3</sup>

قرار در کف آن زادگان بگیرد مال  
نه صبر در دل عاشق نه آب در غربال

"Wealth does not stay long in the hands of noblemen, no more than patience in lovers' hearts or water in sieves."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, p.54.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. p.55.

In Kasravi's opinion, Sa'di's chief aim in writing poetry was definitely to play with words.<sup>1</sup> The ideas which he expresses in verse are an irrational mixture of realism and idealism. No doubt, as Kasravi points out,<sup>2</sup> the world of Islam including Iran was very impure and confused in the 6th century A.H./13th century A.D.; so it is not surprising that Sa'di should have produced the fifth chapter of the Golestán,<sup>3</sup> which is full of harmful ideas and unashamedly against morality. Kasravi regards Sa'di's poetry as most beautiful and very melodious,<sup>4</sup> but at the same time often extremely dangerous for society.

Mowlavi (Jalál ol-Din Rumi).<sup>5</sup> Kasravi puts Mowlavi in the same class as Khayyám. He recognizes that Mowlavi was one of the great leaders of the mystic cult (Sufigari), which he says came to the East from Rum (i.e. Constantinople or Asia Minor). Unfortunately mysticism had lost its simplicity by the time that it began to influence the world of Islam and the minds of innocent people in the Eastern countries. Kasravi summarizes Mowlavi's philosophy as follows:

1. Mowlavi believed in pantheism and said that ultimately humans will join God.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, p.57.

2. Ibid., p.58.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.60.

5. Author of the mystic Masnavi-ye Ma'navi and of the Diván-e Shams-e Tabriz and other works; died at Konya 1273.

6. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, p.61.

Kasravi thinks that this is merely a fantasy and not worth our attention.

2. Mowlavi shared the view of many other poets that man's whole destiny depends on predestination by God.
3. Mowlavi condemned life and all material things, and said that we should not waste time in this world by concerning ourselves with its affairs. Certain lines of poetry show his attitude in this respect, for instance the opening lines of his Masnavi:<sup>1</sup>

بشنو از نی چون حکایت می کند  
 و ز جدائی ها شکایت می کند  
 کز نیتان تا مرا بیریه اند  
 از نفیرم در دوزن نا لیده اند

"Hearken to the reed when it speaks, when it tells the tale of separations. Since they cut me from the reed-bed, men and women have been grieved by my trumpet."<sup>2</sup>

اهل دنیا از کسین دل از همی  
 لعنت الله عليهم اجمعین

"God's curse is on all this world's people, great and small."<sup>3</sup>

The Iranians, being impressed by such poetry, behaved according to the philosophy of such poets, and remained inactive. Kasravi considers Mowlavi's Masnavi to be one of the books which have done most harm to the Iranians.<sup>4</sup>

1. Dar Payramun-e Adabiat, p.62.

2. Sufigari, Tehran 1332/1943, p.19.

3. Kasravi, Sufigari, Tehran 1323/1944, p.13.

4. Dar Payramun-e Adabiat, pp 62-63.

Háfez.<sup>1</sup> Kasravi shows more enmity towards Háfez than any other poet. His mind, in Kasravi's view, was full of wrong ideas;<sup>1a</sup> one can never achieve any clear idea from reading his poetry. Kasravi made his comments about Háfez in a book called Háfez cheh mi-guyad? (What does Háfez say?)<sup>2</sup> He points out that Háfez, like many other poets, tried to impress the people by writing beautifully rhymed and rhythmic verses. He professed to be a Moslem, but proved himself the opposite in his poems, e.g. when he says:

اگر شبی بزبانم حدیث توبه رود      زبى طهارتى آن را بى نمره کنم

"If at night words of penitence come to my tongue, let me rinse my mouth of their impurity with wine."<sup>3</sup>

Háfez indeed simply poured scorn on Islam. The subjects of which Háfez had gained knowledge are worth mentioning.<sup>4</sup>

1. The Qor'án and its interpretation.
2. Greek philosophy.
3. Sufism (Sufigari), and its harmful doctrines.
4. History of Iran.
5. Astronomy.
6. Fatalism (jabrigari).

1. Khwājah Shams ol-Dīn Mohammad Háfez of Shiráz, c.1320-c.1391.  
2. Dar Payramun-e Adabiat, p.67.

2. Kasravi, Hafez cheh mi-guyad, Tehran 1323/1946.

3. Hafez cheh mi-guyad, p.5.

4. Ibid. p.6.

Kasravi thinks that Háfēz confused himself with his own knowledge.<sup>1</sup> He could not give any correct or precise idea of any of these subjects. Kasravi infers that having such a variety of subjects in the mind was the cause of his confusion and hesitation; he never actually knew which course he wished to follow.<sup>2</sup> At different times Háfēz was drawn to all of them. Sometimes he was interested in Greek philosophy, as when he says:

پس از اینم بنور شائبه در جوهر فرد  
که دهان تو بدین نکته خوش آمد لای است

"After this there will be no blemish in my individual essence. Your lips are a good proof of this point."<sup>3</sup> Sometimes Sufism influenced him:

عجاب چهره جان میثور خمار تنم  
خوش آمدی که از این چهره پرده برکنم

"The dust of my body is becoming the veil covering the face of my soul. Happy the moment when I will cast off the veil from my face."<sup>4</sup>

Sometimes Háfēz wrote poetry prompted by mysticism of the tavern (kharábatigari):

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1. Háfēz cheh mi-guyad, p.8.

2. Ibid., p.9.

3. Ibid., p.7.

4. Ibid.

حدیث از مطرب دمی که دراز دهر کمتر بهیچ کس ننگش نکشد و ننگش آید بجهت این معیار

"Tell tales of minstrels and wine, worry less about the secrets of fate; for nobody has solved, nor will solve, this riddle by means of science."<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes he was inspired by old Iranian tales:

قدح بشرط ادب گیر زانکه ترکیش زطله سر همیشه و بهیچ است و قباد

"Take the cup as politeness requires, because it is made from the skulls of Jamshid and Bahman and Qobād."<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes he paid attention to astronomy:

بگیر طره مه طلعتی و غصه نخور که سعد دخی ز تاشیر زهره و زحل است

"Grasp the tresses of a moon-faced beauty, and grieve not; for good luck and ill luck arise from the influence of Venus and Saturn."<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes he became interested in predestination (jabrigari):

بصیب من چو خرابات کرده است الله در این میان مرا زاهد بگویم کنا

"Since God has placed my lot in the tavern, say, O saintly man, what fault of mine it is that I live in such surroundings."<sup>4</sup>

Háfez used all these materials in his poetry, without believing in any of them. Although people have always thought of Háfez as a mystic of the tavern (kharábati),<sup>5</sup> in

1. Hafez cheh mi-guyad, p.7.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. p.8.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. p.29.

Kasravi's opinion he was really never concerned with anything of the sort. He always disparaged this lower world, and often said that God is not completely perfect. The world and everything connected with it, he said, are all lies. Consequently the reading of his poetry causes people to become inactive and to cease trying to improve their individual situations or those of their fellow-men. Many Iranians followed the doctrines of Háfēz and became time-servers. Kasravi thinks that Háfēz is one of the most unacceptable and harmful of the Persian poets.<sup>1</sup> He lists the defects of Háfēz as follows:

1. Háfēz admired wine in just the same way as Khayyám did. His extravagances in the way of praising wine reached the verge of madness, for instance when he says:

بیا ساقی آن کوب آتش نواز      بمن رسته تا یا بهم از نغمه خلاص

"O cup-bearer give me that fiery wine, so that I may find relief from sorrow."<sup>2</sup>

2. In accordance with the ideas of the mysticism of the tavern (kharábátigari), Háfēz thought that the world is quite unstable, and was most persistent in stressing this point. He says:

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, p.89.

2. Háfēz cheh mi-guyad, p.31.

حاصل کار که کون و مکان اینهم نیست  
 باده پیش آرد که اسباب جهان اینهم نیست

"The product of this workshop of the universe is all nothing. Bring out the wine, for this world's goods are all nothing."<sup>1</sup>

Like the Sufis, Hāfez led people towards laziness and weakness, and sometimes even told them how to beg and earn a living thereby. For example he says:

غلام هستم آنم که زیر چرخ کبدر ز هر چه رنگ تعلق پذیرد آزاد است

"I am the slave of Him, who beneath the azure dome is free of any tinge of attachment (to worldly things)."<sup>2</sup>

His poetry belittled Islam. For example it is written in the Qor'an: *هو الغفور الرحيم*

"He (God) is forgiving and compassionate."<sup>3</sup> Hāfez infers from this that God will forgive and bless everybody, even the drunkard, and thus he says:

می خور بیا ننگ چنگ و محذور عفو در کسی  
 سکوید ترا که باده محذور که هو الغفور

"Drink wine to the sound of the harp and grieve not; if anyone tells you not to drink wine, reply 'He is forgiving.'"<sup>4</sup>

A reader of the poetry of Hāfez who seeks its meaning will face great difficulty. Of course this does not apply

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1. Hāfez cheh mi-guyad, p.31.
  2. Dar Payramun-e Adabiat, p.90.
  3. Ibid., p.91.
  4. Ibid., p.92.

only to Háfēz, because the majority of Iranian poets deserve criticism for their obscurity. For example, when Háfēz says:

لغیرم مرحله عشق پیش نه قدمی      که سودها بری (در این سفر تیرانی کرد

"Set out with a resolve to reach the stage of love, for you will gain much if you can complete this journey,"<sup>1</sup> Kasravi thinks that we cannot understand what Háfēz means by the word "love" ('eshq), as there are various kinds of love.<sup>2</sup> We can never recognise whether love according to Háfēz's definition means human love or love for God. Apart from that, a person who admires wine in a most blatant way cannot love God deeply, and most probably will suffer by reason of his indifference to God. Some poets think that poetry is a pearl of literature. Kasravi thinks that this depends on what we want in literature.<sup>3</sup> Iranian poets produced thousands of lines of poetry, but wasted their lives.

It is always stated that poets like Háfēz and Sa'di loved God. Kasravi considers that Sufism,<sup>4</sup> which includes and emphasizes love for God, was founded by the Greek philosopher Plotinus (c.205-c.262 A.D.), and he acknowledges that what Plotinus himself said was decent and acceptable; it was that if one wants to draw near to God, one must behave

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1. Dar Payramun-e Adabiát, p.72.

2. Háfēz Cheh mi-guyad, p.28.

3. Dar Payramun-e Adabiát, p.38.

4. Sufigari, p.9.

worthily. The poets, however, witnessed the invasion of Iran and brutal slaughter of great numbers of Iranians by the Mongols, and yet they remained inactive and silent and scarcely made the slightest comment.

As Kasravi sees it, Sufism, is derived from the philosophy of Plotinus who said that the human soul has come from eternity.<sup>1</sup> He acknowledges that Plotinus's main intention in saying this was to warn the people about God.

Centuries later, Sufism began to elaborate Plotinus's philosophy, and finally built up a very complicated system on the basis of his simple concept.

After this, poets began writing poetry about the ideas of Sufism.

Finally, "dishonest" people persuaded the young generation to absorb all these ideas, and thereby weakened their strength of will.

On similar grounds, Kasravi attacks European orientalists, saying that they wanted to keep the Iranian people weak and ignorant by spreading poisonous ideas among them, so that the Europeans might be better able to defeat them in all fields.<sup>2</sup> The<sup>3</sup> orientalists knew in what condition the Iranian people were living, and this was their way of demoralizing the

1. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, p.112.

2. Ibid., pp 116-117.

3. Sufigari, pp 6-8.

innocent Iranian people. The same policy was followed by almost all the European countries. The Russians worked particularly hard in this respect, and their orientalist showed a lot of interest in some Iranian poets, particularly Nezāmi,<sup>1</sup> who they say was a socialist. Kasravi thinks that Nezāmi is no better than the other poets and cannot find any special value in his works.<sup>2</sup> What benefit, he asks, has the world of socialism to gain from Nezāmi's poetry?

Kasravi's study of the Persian poets finally led him to these two conclusions:

1. The poets praised themselves, and the European orientalist praised them in accordance with the European policy of keeping the Eastern world backward.<sup>3</sup>

2. The majority of the Iranian people were quite innocent, and praised the poets simply in order to keep in step with the prevailing fashion. From the time when Kasravi started to make his criticisms of Persian literature in 1921, nearly everybody thought that he was showing a senseless enmity towards poets as a class and that he was denigrating Iran's greatest pride and glory.<sup>4</sup> Some people said that poetry cannot obey reason and must issue from the feelings rather than from the brain. Kasravi replied that the Persian poets

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1. Dar Payramun-e Adabiat, p.121. Nezāmi (d.1203), the greatest Persian romantic poet, lived at Ganjeh in the part of Azerbaijan annexed by Russia in 1812.

2. Ibid. p.125.

3. Ibid. p.128.

4. 'Isa Sadiq, 'Ali Asghar Hekmat, Forughi and Ra'di Azarakhshi were among those who strongly opposed Kasravi's criticisms of poetry and the poets.

only express caprices, not deep feelings.<sup>1</sup> His opponents angrily rejected his criticisms of Háfiez, Sa'di, Khayyám, etc., and said that they could not see any harm in reading the works of these poets. Kasravi retorted<sup>2</sup> that he had had every right to be critical. He particularly objected to those who put Háfiez and Sa'di in the same range as Shakespeare and Victor Hugo.<sup>3</sup> He said that Victor Hugo was a great writer who tried to understand the French people's position in his time and to warn them through his books of the realities facing them. Kasravi thought that the only Iranian poet really deserving praise is Ferdowsi,<sup>4</sup> without whose effort the Persian language would have been even more impure than it is now. Kasravi also respects Náser Khosrow (d.1088). Apart from a number of poems on Bátenigari (i.e. Esma'ili religious themes), Náser Khosrow can be considered a remarkable poet, Kasravi thinks. On the other hand, Kasravi asks how anyone can deny the disgraceful character of the poetry of Anvari (d.c.1190).<sup>5</sup> In every respect, Kasravi thinks, he was a corrupt poet, for example when he says:

بہ تیغ کین تو آن را کہ کشته کرد اجل      خدای زنده نگرداندش ببنفخ صدر

"When death has killed him with the sword of your (i.e. Soltán Sanjari's) spite, God will not restore him to life, not even

1. Dar Payrámun-e She'r o Shá'eri, p.34.

2. Dar Payramun-e Adabiat, p.140.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., pp 141-142.

5. Sokhanrání-ye Kasravi dar Anjoman-e Adabi, p.25.

with the blast of the (Herald Angel's) trumpet."<sup>1</sup> "How can one accept," Kasravi asks, "that God will not reincarnate the dead bodies killed by Sanjar's sword?" Kasravi contrasts Anvari's attitude with that of Ferdowsi, who said:

چو ایران نباشد تن من مباد

"When Iran ceases to exist, may my body cease to exist."

هنر نزد ایرانیان رست دین

"Art belongs to the Iranians, and to them only."

Kasravi likewise attacks Qatrān of Tabriz (d.1072), who spent all his life praising kings or rulers.<sup>2</sup> Such books deserve to be burnt,<sup>3</sup> Kasravi thinks. He admits that the Iranian poets were not intentional enemies of their country; they were just shallow-minded persons. We cannot depend on their writings for guidance. "Right now," he says, "it is time that Iranians should work hard to find a new and better way of life. We must build a wall between our past and our future, in order to keep the young generation away from dangerous poetry books."<sup>4</sup>

Kasravi's disapproval of the poetry of Hāfez particularly angered his opponents. One of the most outspoken among them was Ebrāhīm Monaqqaḥ, who in 1324/1945 wrote a book "Hāfez's Tavern, the clue to its explanation - A reply to Kasravi. The key to the language of Hāfez,"<sup>5</sup> in refutation of Kasravi's

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1. Sokhanrāni-ye Kasravi dar Anjoman-e Adabi, p.24.

2. Ibid., p.25.

3. Ibid., p.29.

4. Ibid., p.37.

5. Ebrāhīm Monaqqaḥ, Maykhāneh-ye Khājeh Hāfez, Meftāḥ-e Bayān. Pasokh-e Kasravi, ya Kelid Zaban-e Hāfez, Tehrān 1325/1946.

book Háfez cheh mi-guyad ("What does Hafez say?"). Ebráhim Monaqqah maintains that poets are like painters by nature, and try to portray feelings which will impress other men.<sup>1</sup> A poet's characteristics, he says, are firstly a strong imagination and secondly a wish to lead people towards happiness and teach them truth and reality. Rejecting Kasravi's idea of poets, he says that Kasravi is a simpleton where poetry is concerned and has no understanding of it;<sup>2</sup> He denounces a particular school of poets without giving any reason other than some feeble and quite unacceptable arguments. If poets such as Háfez or Sa'di often bring wine and love into their poetry, they do not mean wine in the sense of drinking and getting drunk, or love in a merely physical sense, but use them as symbols and speak of them in connection with higher things. For instance when Mowláná Rumi (Mowlavi) says:

ای برادر تو همین اندیشه ای

ما بقی تو استخوان در پشه ای

"O brother, you are mind alone, for the rest you are only bone and beard,"<sup>3</sup> Ebráhim Monaqqah thinks that Rumi wants to tell us of the existence of a spiritual world beyond this earthly world and also to tell us that we can find the reality of the spiritual world by using our minds, whereas the flesh

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1. Maykháneh-ye Khájah Háfez, pp 4-7.

2. Ibid. pp 4-7.

3. Ibid. p.34.

and skeleton of our bodies serve only for this life.<sup>1</sup> The only valuable thing in a man is his mind, nothing else. Mowlānā Rumi, who was one of the great mystics of his time and still stands high in the world of mysticism, has also said, in the Divān-e Shams-e Tabriz:

من مت و تودیوانه مارا که بردخانه  
صد بار تو را گفتم کم خور در این بستان

"I am drunk, and you are mad; who will carry us home? A hundred times I told you, drink two or three wine cups less."<sup>2</sup> In this line, according to Monaqqaḥ, Mowlavi tells his spiritual guide Shams how much he disapproves of wine in the sense of drinking. Monaqqaḥ says that the poets whom Kasravi attacked and sought to belittle in the eyes of ill-informed people are the pride and glory of Iran, and not only of Iran, for they are known and esteemed all over the world.<sup>3</sup> They have added, he says, a great deal to the world's "knowledge." Kasravi by writing nonsense about them had not only achieved nothing, but had also degraded himself. Monaqqaḥ observes that Kasravi objected to Hāfez more than to any other poet,<sup>4</sup> alleging that Hāfez had merely amused himself by playing with words and had written his verses with no plan or coherent meaning, but simply with the aim of combining words in a

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1. Maykhāneh-ye Khājah Hāfez, p.34.

2. Ibid. p.50

3. Ibid. p.50

4. Ibid.

rhythmic and rhyming way. Kasravi particularly objected to the following line by Háfēz:

بخرم توبه بکسر لقمه رستخاره کنم  
بهار توبه شکن ویرانه چاره کنم

"Intending to repent, I said at dawn, I will open the Qor'an for an omen. Now that repentance-smashing spring is coming, what am I to do?"<sup>1</sup>

Kasravi said that Háfēz, who was a Moslem, ought not to have spoken in that way, and that this line shows how ignorant he was of the Holy Book which he was supposed to know by heart; but Kasravi had not understood its meaning. In fact Háfēz, who was a symbolic poet,<sup>2</sup> when speaking about love means love of God, not love in its common and wordly sense. Kasravi also objected to another verse by Háfēz:

دوش دیدم که ملائک در میخانه زدند  
گل آدم به شسته و به پیمانه زدند

"Last night I dreamt that angels knocked on the tavern door; that they mixed human clay and poured it into the wine cup."<sup>3</sup>

In this verse, Háfēz (according to Ebráhim Manaqqah)<sup>4</sup> is trying to show that the world is a storehouse filled with the reality of God, and every creature drinks from the wine cup of this reality; he then sets out on the spiritual path, and

1. Maykhaneh-ye Khajeh Háfēz, p.4.

2. Ibid., p.27.

3. Háfēz cheh mi-guyad, p.27.

4. Maykhaneh-ye Khajeh Háfēz, p.28.

after passing through many stages eventually attains the union with God which is the highest aim. Human beings remain a combination of clay and water until they drink this wine of reality and become one with God, when they will lose their lower nature. Háfēz's true meaning is therefore "Let us become drunk with this wine of reality."

Although Kasravi recognises that poetry is the art of decoration with words,<sup>1</sup> he complains that in Iran most of the poets have cared only about the decoration and not at all about the meaning of the words; whereas all poets, in his opinion, ought to be conscious of two main points, firstly the need to be meaningful, and secondly the need to arrange their meaning coherently. Poetry must not be mere hallucination, but something with real meaning, and the arrangement of the lines of a poem must be considered more important than its verbal decoration. "Why has Persian literature, and particularly Persian poetry, so little value in the modern world?" Kasravi asks. He replies, "This is because the poets forgot or deliberately ignored these two principals. Not only poets, however, but also historians committed the same fault." Kasravi cites as examples the Dorreh-ye Náderi,<sup>2</sup>

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1. Háfēz cheh mi-guyad, p.45.

2. By Mirza Mahdi Khan Astarábádi, who was Náder Sháh's court historian; this and his other book Trikh-e Jahan-gosha-ye Náderi are the most important sources for Nader Shah's reign.

the Tárikh-e Vassáf<sup>1</sup> and the Tárikh-e Mo'jam,<sup>2</sup> whose authors were all more interested in writing flowery language than in recording historical facts. To Ferdowsi,<sup>3</sup> however, Kasravi as already said, gives ample praise. He thinks that Ferdowsi rendered the highest service to Iran by putting the national epic (Sháhnámeh) into Persian verse. In this great poem, Kasravi says, Ferdowsi tried to arouse the people's patriotism, by showing them how precious liberty is and how mighty Iran had once been; he thereby encouraged the people to fight for their freedom and defend themselves against their enemies.

Kasravi observes that the art of writing Persian poetry was first practised at the courts of kings, who were the great patrons, and that consequently the poets, in order to earn their living, busied themselves with praising the kings;

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1. Written for the Ilkhán Oljaytu Khodá-bandeh (1305-1316) by 'Abdollah ibn Fazlollah Shirazi who held the title Vassáf; an important source for the Ilkhanid period, but notoriously the most verbose and tedious history book ever written in Persian.
  2. Written in 730, 1330 by Hamdollah Mostawfi Qazvini.
  3. Abul-Qásem Hasan-ebn 'Ali Ferdowsi (c.932-1020). He was commissioned by Soltan Mahmud of Ghaznah, who according to the story promised a reward of one gold dinar for every line of the Sháhnámeh, but when after twenty-five years it was finished, offered him only one silver derham for each of the 60,000 lines. Ferdowsi spurned this offer and fled; he afterwards wrote a famous satire on Mahmud's meanness. According to the Chahar Maqaleh of the secretary Nezami 'Aruzi (written 1160), Ferdowsi was a Shi'ite.

for this reason they wrote about unreal things or in exaggerated styles. Some of the worst Persian literature was produced in this way. The poets carried exaggeration just as far when they wrote love poems (ghazals), which became very popular. In this kind of poetry the poet pretended to lower himself, in order to be more impressive in the eyes of his beloved. Some poets called themselves a fly or a dog. There was no limit to their verbal extravagance. A normal mind, Kasravi says, will certainly think that the poets were insane, or at least that with two or three exceptions they were very weak-minded. What does Nezāmi really mean, Kasravi asks,<sup>1</sup> when he says this in praise of one of the kings?

پیش من اکلن قدری التجران

دیده بندگی می ز من

با نعل آندم که نشینی نجران

کاغذ لاف بگیت می ز من

"When you sit at table with destiny, throw me some bones.

For I boast of being your dog, I boast of the glory of being your slave."<sup>2</sup>

As for Sufism (Moslem mysticism), Kasravi thinks that it

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1. Nezāmi Ganje'i (1140/41-1203), the greatest Persian romantic poet. The quotation is from Makhzan ol-Asrar, the first and least interesting of Nezami's five poems (Khamseh); it is mystic and moralistic, not romantic.
  2. Sokhanrāni-ye Kasravi dar Anjoman-e Adabi, p.26.

became extremely harmful for Iranian society. The earliest Sufis had admittedly been very simple people with the best intentions. The basis of their faith was to help other people, and not to strive for material wealth but to try to better their souls by doing good deeds. Unfortunately they afterwards changed. In Kasravi's words, "They even went so far as to give up work altogether and seek their livelihood from begging. Shaykh 'Attár,<sup>1</sup> in his Tazkerat ol-Owliá, (Biographies of the Saints), describes how one Sufi persuaded another Sufi to become a beggar in the bazaar. Gradually some of the mystics began to write poetry in which they combined poetical themes with their own strange ideas and unreal thoughts. In Kasravi's view, they degraded Islam, Iran, and Sufism itself. The excuse for their poetry was that it was supposed to prove God's unity; but these poets could not prove it in any adequate and acceptable way. Instead, Kasravi says, by spreading their vicious and harmful ideas, they influenced and poisoned the innocent people's minds. They spoiled the people's simple and harmless views of God and of Creation of the world, etc. Out of the thousands of Iranian poets, Kasravi says,<sup>2</sup> only a

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1. Shaykh Farid ol-Din 'Attár Nishápurí (said to have lived 1120-1230), famous for his Tazkerat ol-Owliá (biographies of Sufi Saints) in rhymed prose and his Manteq ol-Tayr (Language of the Birds) in verse.
  2. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.32.

handful wrote reasonable or harmless poetry. The others wrote pernicious verse which continues to poison the Iranian people's mind. Above all, Kasravi says,<sup>1</sup> it is important that future generations should not read such stuff and should not be persuaded by it to give up activity and feel indifferent towards the world. The young people of Iran must reform their way of thinking. A complete change of intellectual outlook in Iranian society is urgently needed; and with this in view, Kasravi presents his suggestions for the reform of Persian poetry and literature.

1. Every kind of poem must be meaningful;<sup>2</sup> otherwise it is rubbish or hallucination.
2. The verses of a poem must be coherently arranged; otherwise their meaning is spoiled.
3. Panegyric and exaggeration must be completely eliminated.
4. Extravagant language and symbolism should be avoided.
5. The ghazal (traditional form of love or wine poem in monorhyme) is nonsensical and more pernicious than any other form of Persian poetry.
6. Abusive satire, with the use of shameful words in condemnation of others, is not a permissible form of poetry.

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1. Dar Payrámun-e She'r o Shá'eri, p.33.

2. Ibid., pp 32-33.

7. Today, besides useless matters such as the notions of mysticism or the ideas of the ghazal, there are also beneficial themes which can be used as subjects for poetry.

Subject to these conditions and provided that the poet possesses real poetic talent, poetry is in Kasravi's opinion permissible and even desirable; but otherwise it should not be tolerated.

Writing in Paymán, year 2, No.2,<sup>1</sup> Kasravi points out that the panegyric poets, who wrote exaggerated praises of the might and glory and magnanimity of kings, trod a path which was very far from reality. They pretended to show how devoted they were to the king, and how strongly they felt for him. "I personally", says Kasravi, "call them liars. I not only blame the poets who thus demeaned themselves; I also blame the kings who encouraged such persons by paying them so much attention." For example, Kasravi blames Soltán Sanjar (1118-1157)<sup>2</sup> for inducing the poet Anvari to come to his court,<sup>3</sup> but not Anvari for accepting the inducement. It was Sanjar, Kasravi says, who encouraged and persuaded Anvari

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1. Dar Payrámun-e She'r o Shá'eri, p.70.

2. One of the Saljuq Turkish rulers of Iran, and patron of the poets Mo'ezzi and Anvari, who wrote odes (gasidehs) in his honour. The historians also praised his chivalry and gallantry. Kasravi, however, thinks that Sanjar did not deserve all this praise.

to write the nonsense which he wrote. Anvari was so confident and sure of his art that he even says in one line:

من نمی‌دانم که این جنس سخن را نام چیست  
نه نبوت می‌توانم خواندش نه ساعی

"I do not know what name this sort of poetry should have. I cannot call it prophethood, nor can I call it magic."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time Kasravi emphasizes that he is not hostile to poets as such.<sup>2</sup> "My ambition," he declares, "is to warn them and guide them to reality." In this world everything ought to have a beneficial use, because there is no point in producing useless things, even if they are not positively harmful. One of Kasravi's learned friends, Sayyed 'Ali Akbar Borqa'i of Qom, objected to his arguments,<sup>3</sup> saying that Kasravi had maligned Persian literature and had not appreciated its value; there was no justification in Kasravi's argument that poetry is unreliable or useless just because its words are chosen and arranged in an impressive and beautiful manner. Another friend of Kasravi's, whose name is not mentioned, wrote asking why Kasravi persisted in denouncing mysticism. Kasravi admits that poetry has not always been harmful and can sometimes be very useful,<sup>4</sup> but thinks that the number of poetry books which cause no harm

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1. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.37.

2. Ibid., p.40.

3. Sokhanrani-ye Kasravi dar Anjoman-e Adabi, p.39.

4. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, pp 43-44.

and which bring benefit by stirring people to patriotism or heroism is very small. Unfortunately many poets have persisted in describing their feelings and desires in a very immoral way. Kasravi recognises that poetry is an art so strongly rooted in the Iranian people's mind that it can never be completely eliminated; but he insists that immoral poetry books should be banned or expurgated and that contemporary poets should be urged to write in a more respectable way.<sup>1</sup> Kasravi notes the words of one of his critics named Rava'i<sup>2</sup>, who had said that human mentalities and desires are combinations of different feelings, such as love, hate, fear, happiness, sadness, etc. In some people these feelings are much stronger and more complicated than in others. As a result they describe their mental and spiritual states in a more sensitive way, and they also want to impress their readers; they therefore compose poetry, which is the finest instrument of expression. The talent for writing poetry is somehow innate. Human beings have possessed this talent since the stone age, and as time passed the art progressed beyond the primitive stage. Blame is only to be put on those poetry books which have harmed society from the ethical and moral viewpoint. Kasravi replies as follows.<sup>3</sup> "All my objections are against those

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1. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, pp 43-44.

2. Ibid., p.50.

3. Ibid., pp 45-46.

poets who tried to write their poems in ways which were artificial or not respectable; for instance against poets who wanted to write about nature's beauty but tried to describe its simple grace in heavy and pompous words or with peculiar supernatural ideas. Their aim in writing in such ways was certainly to create a deeper impression and to exercise more influence. Hardly any of our poets have written about historical, social, or national victories."

Once a group of learned men<sup>1</sup> held a meeting at which they declared that poetry is the language of nature and that Kasravi had no right to attack poets. He replied:<sup>2</sup> "To those who simply want to speak and describe the beauty of nature, I have no objection. My main reason for opposing them is to warn them how harmful this poetry can be for our society if they write about immoral matters. I cannot remain silent about those poets who always write about wine and drunkenness, or who call the world useless. They know how to write in a very pleasing and persuasive way, with the result that the people, especially the younger generation, become fascinated and then soon take the wrong road. A poet should not just write about his imaginary feelings or hallucinations; he can become useful and be a good moral leader

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1. Sorur Khan from Afghanistan, Rypka from Czechoslovakia, Safinia from Iran, Mohammad Taher Razavi from India, Khazeni from Iran (Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.46.)
  2. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.46.

if he will write about real things, true events, and actual facts. One can scarcely find a poet who wrote a single line about the Mongols<sup>1</sup> and their hideous cruelty when they attacked Iran, killing even innocent babies, women and animals. Yet the poets could have written thousands of laments about this disaster. What can one say about these poets who produced books praising Chengiz Khán, even giving him the title of God?"

Kasravi insists on the need for modernization<sup>2</sup> of the art of poetry in Iran. Today, he maintains, there are many useful matters and fields from which a poet may draw inspiration. He says that exaggeration and writing about figments of the mind are still regarded as privileges of Iranian poets<sup>3</sup> and have long been characteristic of them. This habit of exaggeration may even be useful, if a poet uses it to encourage the people to have self-respect, as did Ferdowsi,<sup>4</sup> who is definitely one of Iran's greatest poets; but Kasravi cannot be indifferent towards poets who exaggerated about unreal things and did so mainly for the purpose of getting money or more money.<sup>5</sup> He cannot tolerate poets who are liars, who praise cruel governors and call

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1. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.47.

2. Sokhanrani-ye Kasravi dar Anjoman-e Adabi, p.15.

3. Ibid., p.23.

4. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.56.

5. Ibid., pp 47-49.

them as honest as prophets. Exaggeration can thus be either useful or harmful. In every class of our society, Kasravi observes, we can see those who try to get money or wealth or position by exaggeration. If Iranians today analyse their daily conversation, they will notice that fifty per-cent of it consists of praising and admiring false things or people. This habit, he says, is the direct result of Persian poetry and literature; it has ended by becoming part of the national life. As to Ravá'i's<sup>1</sup> argument that the mass of the people should be blamed, Kasravi states that in fact they are the dupes of the poets and have been misled by reading and admiring their poems. The masses of the people, wherever they are, in the West or East, in Asia or Europe, are not capable of deep understanding. They must be warned by their leaders.

A certain Sayyed Mohammad 'Ali Mortazavi sent a letter to Kasravi, in which mentioned that although he himself had nothing to do with poetry, he thought it unfair to attack artistic Iranian poets such as Sa'di and Háfez.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi in reply quoted a line by Háfez:

آن تلخ و شکره صوفی امّ الجبائش خواند اهل لنا و اهل بنی قریه الغداری

"That bitter-like (substance), which the Sufi calls the mother

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1. Dar Payrámun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.62.

2. Ibid., p.61.

of vices, is sweeter and tastier than the cheek of my seductive beloved."<sup>1</sup> Kasravi pointed out that although every word in this verse may have a symbolic meaning, Háfiz nevertheless praised the bitterness of wine in a most eloquent way, calling it sweet as sugar in spite of the fact that he was a Moslem and was writing for a Moslem audience.<sup>2</sup>

Kasravi had no doubt whatever that through the centuries Iran has declined a great deal, both materially and morally, and that one of the main, indeed the most important, reasons has been the existence of many harmful poets who greatly demoralized the people.<sup>3</sup> Their poems poisoned the mind of the masses. They wrote so many books in which they called the world transient and useless that the people were discouraged. "In spite of the ideas of the orientalist, who have called the poets the pride and glory of Iran, I call them useless figures," he says. As already mentioned, in his opinion the orientalist's admiration for the poets has been calculated and deliberate,<sup>4</sup> their basic motive being to keep the Eastern nations in darkness so that the Western nations may exploit their ignorance.

Kasravi also remarks that some poets have sought only to match words together in harmonious and rhythmic lines of

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1. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.62.

2. Ibid., pp 62-63.

3. Ibid.

4. Farhang Chist, Tehran 1325/1946, p.36.

verse, without paying the slightest attention to the meaning.<sup>1</sup> No doubt poets, who are not superior to ordinary people, did not always spend a great deal of effort on their works, but relied on their innate talents. Poetry is not different from prose, according to Kasravi, except that prose is a simple method of expression, while poetry is more complicated. For example, Kasravi considered the ethical poems of Saná'i (d. 1141) to be just as valuable as the ethical prose treatise (Akhlaq-e Nāseri) of Khwājeh Nasir ol-Din Tusi (d. 1273);<sup>2</sup> but he refuses to prefer Sa'di's prose Golestān to his verse Bustān or vice-versa, because the content of each is on the same level. Out of the thousands of Iranian poets, Kasravi as already mentioned thinks that only one deserves admiration and respect, namely Ferdowsi (932-1020), whose poetry is vital and full of heroic deeds. It reminds Iranians of their glorious ancient empire. Moreover Ferdowsi tried hard to write in a simple style and pure Persian language.<sup>3</sup> Although Kasravi thinks that Ferdowsi's work is so great that no Iranian can fail to be impressed by it, he also here *again* criticizes Ferdowsi because his record of events is not accurate and historical. Nevertheless the Shāhnāme remains the model of

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1. Dar Payramun-e Adabiāt, p. 115.

2. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p. 72.

3. Ibid., p. 73.

good Persian language.

Kasravi observes that the foundations of poetry were laid in the palaces of "dictator-kings"<sup>1</sup> and that later it was cultivated also in the khānqāh (monastery) and the maykādeh (tavern). "What have we gained out of this rich store of poetry?" he asks. Since there was no authority to control poets, they were absolutely free to say what they chose and did not stick to any principle in their poetry writing. A certain Mr. Nabavi wrote a letter of protest<sup>2</sup> to Kasravi, asking "Why should you spoil the names of great poets such as 'Omar Khayyām when today in the East and West people avidly read his poetry and benefit from it? In any case you have no right to censure 'Attār or Mowlavi, who are the pride of our community; but instead of honouring them you defame their characters and ignore them." Kasravi replies,<sup>3</sup> saying "Your objection is not logical. Firstly you ought to know the meaning of greatness. What qualities does a person need in order to be great in your eyes? A poet sits in a corner and forgets all his duty to society. He becomes absolutely inactive, but eats the fruit of other people's hard work and just plays with words like toys. To me this is not being great. We Iranians as a nation have not gained the slightest benefit from Mowlavi's thick and

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1. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.73.

2. Ibid., p.79.

3. Ibid., pp 79-84.

heavy Masnavi or 'Attar's works. The poets forgot their basic duty, which was to lead the nation to a better life. They spent all their time writing about the creation of the world, the creation of man, and the end of this life. Yet nobody can draw any conclusion from their writings on these complicated metaphysical matters. To my mind it is not appropriate to dabble in such fields to no purpose." Kasravi declares that he respects Khayyám (d.1123) as a mathematician and scientist;<sup>1</sup> but if one accepts that the Iranians are a Moslem nation, what is the point of publishing Khayyám's poetry, which is absolutely against Islam and its doctrines? Can anyone really live according to Khayyám's philosophy of life?"

Another point which Kasravi makes<sup>2</sup> is that in Iranian history through the centuries there are figures whose names ought to be kept alive in the people's minds; but unfortunately the majority of the people are quite ignorant of them, and instead of the names of such men they know the names of poets who have written various worthless poetry books. Is not it unfortunate that valiant men such as Sattár Khán and Báqer Khán, who fought so hard in the Constitutional struggle, are now forgotten, even though their greatness cannot be denied?

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1. Dar Payrámun-e She'r o Shá'eri, p.81.

2. Dar Payramun-e Adabiat, p.14.

A newspaper called Da'vat-e Eslámi ("Islamic Appeal"), which used to be published at Kermánsháh,<sup>1</sup> reproduced an article from Paymán, Year 8, which Kasravi had contributed. A certain man named Fakhr ol-Tojjár<sup>2</sup> or Fakhr-e Samadi, who although he was not himself a professional poet used to write poetry in his leisure time, sent a letter to Paymán as follows: "After reading Kasravi's article about poets and poetry, my whole attitude has been changed. I can no longer continue writing poetry even occasionally. If you ask a poet what his poetry means, he cannot give you a straightforward answer. I have to confess that I myself do not know the meaning of my own poetry." Kasravi replies:<sup>3</sup> "It is not only you who do not know the meaning of poetry. If the famous poets were alive today, they themselves could not explain their own poetry or even discover their meaning." Another correspondent, Sayyed Hoseyn Badlá, wrote from Qom to Kasravi, saying how grateful he was to Kasravi after reading his ideas about the poets. He added that today plenty of Iranians accept that poetry can be very dangerous if its themes are immoral; indeed it can drag society towards complete darkness and degradation. While accepting that the talent for writing poetry is something innate, he considers

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1. Published at Kermánsháh by Sayyed Mōhammad Taqi Vāhedi Bādla in 1929 (Sadr Hashemi, Tarikh-e Jarayed va Majallat-e Iran, Esfahan, 1327/1948-1332/1953, Vol.2).

2. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.85.

3. Ibid., p.87.

that it ought not to be given unlimited scope, but must be restricted; and he appreciates Kasravi's efforts in this respect. He also mentions the names of a few other men who gave up writing poetry after becoming familiar with Kasravi's ideas.<sup>1</sup> Others who wrote to Paymān saying that they had been convinced by Kasravi and had forthwith given up writing poetry were Mr. Zonubi, Mr. Ansāri and Mr. Mohammad Mirzā Homāyunpur. A certain Mr. Vā'ezpur wrote:<sup>2</sup> "Nobody can deny that harmful nature of, for instance, Iraj Mirzā's collected works.<sup>3</sup> They are potentially most dangerous, especially for the minds of the young generation. The public morality is getting worse and worse every day, yet the Ministry of Education assumes the responsibility for publication of such books." Mr. Vā'ezpur admires Kasravi's efforts to combat such poets. A certain Mr. Zabirollāhzādeh also wrote a letter<sup>4</sup> saying how grateful he was to Kasravi. Before reading Paymān, he had been a devoted and enthusiastic admirer of Hāfez; but Kasravi's article about poetry and poets had convinced him. He then refers to a verse of Hāfez:<sup>5</sup>

گر می فروش حاجت زندان را کند      از دگنه بنجی و رنج بلا کند

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1. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.88.

2. Ibid. p.89.

3. Iraj Mirzā Jalāl ol-Mamālek (1874-1924).

4. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, pp.91-94.

5. Ibid., p.92.

"If the wine seller concedes the drunkards' prayers, God will forgive their sins and ward off disaster."

"How could a Moslem," he asks, "dare to write such words?"<sup>1</sup>

Kasravi remarks that in a line of poetry the words are the skeleton and their meanings are the life and soul. A poem should therefore combine these two elements; otherwise it will be worthless. A poet from Árák named Ahmad Farzin wrote a poem which was published in Paymán. In one of its lines he praises Kasravi's effort as follows:

منظور کردی بجز اصلاح شعر نیست  
کین توفی و تیزبان سیدی بر است

"Kasravi's only aim is the reformation of poetry. Enough carping and chiding at this honest man."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Mir Mahdi Mubad, who in 1336/1957 edited and published Kasravi's writings on poetry in the book Dar Payrámun-e She'r o Shá'eri (On Poetry and Poetry-writing), was another devoted admirer; in a letter to Paymán he stated that as soon as he became familiar with Kasravi's ideas, he started to write respectable verse. Kasravi's favourite poets are those who have written about social, moral and religious matters. Here again he reiterates the importance of Ferdowsi, the greatest national poet of Irán, and calls upon modern Iranians to recognise the

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1. Dar Payrámun-e She'r o Shá'eri, p.92.

2. Ibid., p.132.

continuing value of Ferdowsi's work.<sup>1</sup> Other poets who attracted Kasravi's favourable attention are Abu-Hanifeh Eskáfi (11th century A.D.), some of whose poems Kasravi published in Paymán;<sup>2</sup> Naser Khosrow,<sup>3</sup> the Esmá'ilite poet and traveller (d.1088); Saná'i of Ghazneh (d.1140), who admittedly as a professional poet earned money by praising Soltán Mahmud, but later left his court and wrote some very good ethical poems.<sup>4</sup> Among the modern poets Kasravi has high opinions of 'Áref Qazvini (1882-1933), who helped Iran's Constitutional revolution and wrote poems and songs in praise of the nation's freedom, but died in poverty without any earning money whatever from his poems;<sup>5</sup> and Parvin E'tesámi (1906-1941), a poetess with great depth and purity of feeling and at the same time with a strong sense of humour.

Kasravi in his book Dar Payrámun-e Román ("On the Novel")<sup>6</sup> reiterates that he is strictly against books which are useless or harmful to read. A country's literature and its writers represent its culture and its people's attitude towards life.

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1. Dar Payrámun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.135.

2. Ibid., p.143.

3. Born in Qobadian somewhere near Balkh. He learned the Qor'án by heart and also studied astronomy, arithmetic, and philosophy (Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.148).

4. Dar Payramun-e She'r o Sha'eri, p.156.

5. Born at Qazvin. His divan was first published by Mr. Sayfzadeh in Berlin in 1925, but it was banned for some time in Iran.

6. Dar Payramun-e Román (collected articles by Kasravi from Payman and Parcham), Tehran 1315/1946.

Novelists who write purely imaginary stories come in for severe criticism from Kasravi, in spite of their great popularity. He recognises that the novel is regarded as a branch of literature in Europe,<sup>1</sup> where novel-writing, he says, is even taught to students in the schools. Nevertheless Kasravi<sup>2</sup> thinks that novel writing is on the whole useless, and he is sorry that the Eastern peoples, in this as in other aspects of life, follow European examples even when these are wrong. "What is the point of writing novels?" he asks. Reading illusions and imaginary untrue stories is a childish occupation not suitable for adults. Even if the novelist wants to give moral lessons, the novel is useless for this purpose, because people will not take notice of imaginary stories, whereas they will take notice of true events. Today writing novels has become a habit of the Iranians. In every newspaper one can find space taken up by a novel. People are captivated by novels, most of which are not only useless but extremely harmful. When we let young girls or boys read sensational love stories, we drag them towards immorality, because their minds are immature, and they take the story as a fact. One of the world's famous novelists is Anatole France. Kasravi<sup>3</sup> thinks that

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1. Dar Payrāmūn-e Romān, p.22.

2. Ibid., p.5.

all his books are full of illusions.<sup>1</sup> "What use is it," he asks, "to read this author's novels? He has even misguided people and persuaded them to deny God and abandon their beliefs." As for Alexandre Dumas, his novels are no better than those of Anatole France and have the same bad influence on people's minds. Kasravi asks why, if novelists really wanted to guide the nations towards an understanding of reality and a better way of life, have they produced such abominable and untrue stories?<sup>2</sup> They could have guided people by writing true historical facts and adventures, such as Napoleon's life or George Washington's sacrifices for his country. In Iran novel writers could familiarize the people with great historical events such as the Constitutional revolution and its vicissitudes, and the sufferings and sacrifices of those who gave their lives for the cause of liberty. Kasravi is particularly disgusted by historical novelists who take historical facts and change them in accordance with their own wishes,<sup>3</sup> So many historical events are not properly known or understood because they have been confused with the imaginary statements of writers. Even Tolstoy and Jurji Zaidán,<sup>4</sup> whom Kasravi otherwise admires,

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1. Dar Payramun-e Rómān, pp 8-17.

2. Ibid., p.10.

3. Ibid., p.11.

4. Kasravi says that Jurji Zaidán (1861-1914; a Christian Syrian who lived and wrote in Egypt) in his books Selselat Tavarikh el-Eslam mixed falsehood with truth and showed contempt for Islam and the Arabic language.

spoilt their work (so he says) by dabbling with history and altering historical facts according to their own tastes. Kasravi complains that no Iránians had tried to write books about the men who gained Iran's liberty and their bravery.<sup>1</sup> If Professor E.G. Browne had not written such a book in Europe, nobody would realize how much these men, and particularly the Ázarbáijánis, suffered during the revolution in Iran. "When we have such great figures to write about," Kasravi asks, "why should we write about unreal things?"<sup>2</sup> A lady named Mrs. S. Sayyáh wrote an article "Merits of the Novel" in the newspaper "Irán" in which she disputed Kasravi's criticisms of the novel.<sup>3</sup> While agreeing with Kasravi that the success of anything in Europe does not mean that it is necessarily useful, Mrs. Sayyáh argued that history is a record of events which happened long ago, whereas the novel tells the story of events which may happen in the future. Kasravi replied that we can depend on what has happened, but cannot be sure of what is going to happen.<sup>4</sup> Such being the case, how can we depend on Anatole France's stories or be sure that they will ever come true? Kasravi admits,<sup>5</sup> however, that there are certain novelists whom he can to some extent

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1. Chehel Maqáleh, p.279; an article about Taymur Malek, published in Payman in 1316/1937.

2. Dar Payramun-e Roman, p.14.

3. Ibid., pp 18-32.

4. Ibid., pp 26-28.

5. Ibid., p.21.

respect, such as Victor Hugo and Tolstoy. Victor Hugo can be accepted as a remarkable writer, who tried to awaken his nation by his writings. Nevertheless, if we look at the novels in circulation today, we see that ninety-nine percent of them contain the most vulgar love stories, which are sure to have bad effects on the morals of the simple-minded young people. Thais, the famous and very popular novel of Anatole France, is a mixture of true history and the writer's imagination; we cannot easily distinguish between the truth and falsehood in it, but if we study this book carefully, we see that Anatole France's principal aims were firstly to deny God and secondly to spread immorality. Balzac, in the introduction to his series of novels "La Comédie Humaine", is reported to have said that the task of literature is not in any way higher than the task of historiography, and that the one complements the other: historians write about political events, and novelists write about things not mentioned by historians, and particularly about moral traditions. Kasravi thinks that although this theory sounds plausible, if we look deeply into it, we shall still find it illogical and untenable;<sup>1</sup> for if the morals and traditions really existed, they will have been recorded in the histories, while if they are something imaginary, they will be of no use whatever.

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Román, p.28.

Altogether, in Kasravi's view the vast field of fiction contains almost nothing of value. In Iran, he continues,<sup>1</sup> we can find thousands of books which are as harmful as Anatole France's novels. How can a writer such as Sa'di, who produced the fifth chapter of the Golestán, teach the nation morality? Yet we ignore great figures such as Zoroaster, who was the first Prophet and who led the people to God. In the Persian language, Kasravi concludes, there is only one outstanding novel, namely the Siyáhatnámeḥ-ye Ebráhim Beg (by Hájj Zayn ol-'Ábedin Marághé'i), written just before the Iranian Constitutional revolution.

Comments.

The Main impression gained by the reader of Kasravi's writings about poetry is that he considered the Iranian poets to have stood in the way of the nation's progress, and to have held back the people through the centuries by spreading useless ideas among them. According to Kasravi's definition,<sup>1</sup> any kind of literature is useless unless a moral or material advantage is to be gained from it. Kasravi's ideas on this subject can best be appreciated and criticized if they are divided into segments and commented on separately.

1. Kasravi in his books Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát and Háfez cheh mi-guyad cruelly attacks Iranian poets and in particular Háfez, Sa'di, and Khayyám, who are generally regarded as three of the most distinguished figures in Persian literature; for most people Háfez, Sa'di and Khayyám are the pride of Iran. In Kasravi's opinion, however, their influence is one of the reasons for Iran's backwardness.<sup>2</sup> No doubt writers do exercise great influence on a nation's mind. For instance, if there had been no Voltaire or Rousseau, perhaps the great French revolution would never have happened. Nevertheless Kasravi exaggerates, and is indeed grossly unfair, when he represents the great poets of Iran as such harmful figures. Admittedly the mysticism of Háfez and the pessimism of

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, p.56.

2. Ibid., p.58.

Khayyám were influential up to a point; but there were many other reasons for Iran's backwardness, such as geographical location. These facts are too obvious and undeniable to need discussion.

2. Kasravi lays great stress on the immorality of the fifth chapter of Sa'di's Golestán<sup>1</sup>, which, as he rightly says, may poison the people's minds; but he does not take into account the high moral standard of the advice which Sa'di gives in other chapters of the Golestán. The famous lines in the first chapter alone suffice to redeem Sa'di's sins;

بنی آدم اعضای یکدیگرند که در آفرینش زیب گدازند  
چو عضوی به درد آید در روزگار دگر عضوها را نماند قرار

"The sons of Adam are each other's limbs, for they are created from the same substance. When fate makes one limb ache, the other limbs have no peace."<sup>2</sup> It is preposterous that Kasravi should condemn Sa'di's Golestán just because of its fifth chapter (which incidentally contains a few noble verses, such as the last poem about the unselfish drowning lover, as well as many immoral verses). Not only Iran, but

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1. Dar Payramun-e Adabiât, p.56.

2. Ibid., p.58.

the whole world admires Sa'di as a great writer and poet.

3. Needless to say everybody's personality and way of thinking depends very largely on his environment. Every writer's or poet's work depends to some extent on the needs of the society in which he lives. If Sa'di or Háfēz wrote mystic poetry, this was because mysticism was prevalent in their times and in their social environments. They did not encourage the people to move towards mysticism, but reflected the mood of the contemporary society. Their mystic poems may well have given some spiritual relief to the people of that society, who had been badly hurt by the Mongol conquest.

4. Kasravi tried to demonstrate weaknesses in the poetry of Sa'di and Háfēz, but was very unfair in his judgements. He says that Háfēz composed his lyric poems without any purpose while in a state of hallucination, and that he merely arranged words in a rhythmic and rhyming way. Kasravi quotes a few lines of the poetry of Háfēz, but neglects others. Even if we accept Kasravi's ideas in this respect, we have to admit the incomparable beauty of Háfēz's poetic art. Kasravi not only attacked Háfēz, Sa'di and Khayyám, but criticized the majority of the poets, including even Ferdowsi, the one poet whom he on the whole admired. His objection to Ferdowsi's Shāhnámeh was that its stories have no historical value.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to understand why a scholar like

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Román, pp 35-36.

Kasravi should make such an unfair judgment. He ignored the fact that the Sháhnámeh, which is one of the masterpieces of world literature, was not written as a source for historical facts. Ferdowsi, Iran's greatest poet, toiled thirty years to create this masterpiece, which as Kasravi himself recognises, strengthened the Persian language, encouraged the people to stand firm before their enemies, and taught them patriotism. Kasravi in his denunciation of the poets seems to have forgotten that the human soul cannot be satisfied by materialism alone, but also needs spiritual nourishment. Today, when the world is progressing rapidly from the material point of view, there is still a great need for spiritual life. Most thinkers have predicted that man will suffer if ever he becomes an absolute machine without sense or feeling.

5. Those who are familiar with Western literature will admit that although many books have been written which are just as immoral as parts of the Golestán, none of them have done serious harm to the people or caused them to fall into backwardness. Kasravi's theory in this respect cannot reasonably be accepted. We know that in the past, right up to and even after the Constitutional movement, the mass of the Iranian people were illiterate and ignorant, although some might know by heart a few lines of Ferdowsi or Sa'di or

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Háfez. They were not in touch with the world of poetry and literature, and could not have been demoralized by the poetry of Sa'di or Háfez, which only a very limited number of them were able to read. The great cities, where most of the literate people lived, were not in close touch with the villages nor with each other, and the literate people were not able to spread ideas among the masses. As Kasravi himself admits,<sup>1</sup> the only readers of poetry were the kings and courtiers and certain limited classes of society, because they alone received education.

6. If a literary phrase either in verse or prose is written in an impressive and beautiful way, there is no point in looking at it solely from a moral angle, though of course if it expresses a good moral it will be all the more admirable. If we look at a painting which shows a cruel executioner cutting off the head of an innocent person, but which is painted beautifully, we will not deny its merits even though it shows a very inhuman scene. As for beautiful music, it is doubtful whether any connection between music and morality can exist at all. It seems to us that poetry is an art like music or painting, and that Kasravi was wrong to consider poetry and literature in the same light as science. Art and science are concerned with different aspects of life, and

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiyát, pp 22-24.

cannot be classed together, anymore than love and reason; but both are necessary to human life.

7. According to Kasravi, many poets produced their poetry carelessly and without any purpose;<sup>1</sup> but this view is psychologically wrong in several ways. Human beings, and animals also, act under the influence of both emotion and reason; only in exceptional cases, such as drunkenness or unconsciousness, do humans act without purpose. Even Kasravi cannot prove that Sa'di wrote the Golestān in a state of hallucination. We must admit that the Golestān and many books were produced when the writer or poet was absolutely conscious of what he was doing. Kasravi furthermore objects that poets did not consider the people's needs when they produced their poetry.<sup>2</sup> This is also an unfair criticism, because their work, like all human action, was largely determined by their circumstances and environment; though of course Kasravi is right in saying that Hāfez or Sa'di praised kings to gain something from them.

8. There can be no doubt that man should be active and face difficulties. In any society, however, not all the people are producers or directly active in the nation's economy; and because they are individuals, their personalities, minds and environments differ. A progressive society ought to be

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1. Dar Payrāmūn-e Adabiāt, p.43.

2. Ibid., p.20.

varied, for it needs not only workers, farmers and traders, but also scientists, thinkers, artists and also poets. If a poet lives in his own shell or his own small group, this is not necessarily wrong or objectionable. Most poets require a quiet and calm sort of life, quite different from a factory worker's existence, for the sake of their art.

9. Kasravi thinks that as the poets lived on salaries from kings, and were under an obligation to praise their patrons, therefore, in order to earn their living, they wrote poetry to please the kings and not for the mass of the people. Yet beautiful poetry is to be admired for its own sake, whether its inspiration came from a king or a beggar; and since the mass of the people in Iran were not interested in poetry, it is difficult to see how the poets could have taken the people's needs into consideration. Kasravi's mistake was that he confused poet and poetry. He forgot the Arabic proverb

اَنْظُرْ اِلَى مَا قَالَ وَلَا تَنْظُرْ اِلَى مَنْ قَالَ

"Pay heed to what he said, not to who said it." Kasravi is quite right in emphasizing that poetry in Iran was not the language of the masses;<sup>1</sup> but he is not right in saying that it is therefore valueless.

10. Kasravi read the poetry of Khayyám, Sa'di and Háfez, and censured certain passages. He did not concern himself

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1. Sokhanráni-ye Kasravi dar Anjoman-e Adabi, pp 27-30.

with textual criticism. Already in Kasravi's time experts had shown that the texts of classical Persian poetry are not always pure and often contain lines or passages which the poets themselves did not write. This is the case with Khayyám's quatrains in particular. If Kasravi intentionally ignored this problem, his criticisms of (for instance) Khayyám cannot then be considered just and fair, and if he unintentionally disregarded it, his criticisms cannot then be considered scholarly.

11. Kasravi is very hostile to the orientalists who admired Iran's poets,<sup>1</sup> because he thinks that their admiration was prompted by a malicious purpose;<sup>2</sup> they misled the Iranians and other Eastern peoples, so he said, in order that the Western peoples might exploit their weakness. Although Kasravi was probably right in thinking that some European orientalists worked for the interests of their own governments and felt little sympathy for the struggles of the modern Iranian and other Eastern peoples to achieve freedom and progress, this certainly was not true of all orientalists. Professor E. G. Browne of Cambridge, for example, did everything he could to support the Iranian people in their Constitutional struggle. Moreover certain orientalists toiled hard

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Adabiát, pp 116-128.

2. Ibid., p.119.

to gain accurate knowledge of Iranian poetry, literature, history and civilization, and published their knowledge in valuable books, which today are studied and appreciated by Iranians as well as foreigners. Mr. Mahdi Mojtahedi, author of a useful book on the notable personalities of Āzarbāijān in the Constitutional struggle, is one of the Iranian writers who has criticized Kasravi's attitude to European orientalists.<sup>1</sup> In his opinion, Kasravi's accusation that all orientalists worked for the interest of their own countries cannot possibly be accepted. Kasravi was particularly unfair when he said Iran's great scholars were bribed by foreign countries to re-publish poetical texts and write books about the ideas of philosophers.

Not unnaturally, Kasravi's denunciations of most of the Persian classics often inspired very extreme reactions. To some modern poets he is the symbol of everything infamous and degenerate, whose influence could only be evil and perverse. For instance Malek ol-Sho'arā Bahār (1850-1951), by general consent the greatest poet of modern times, and Adib ol-Slantaneh Sami'i both wrote poems in which they bitterly criticised Kasravi. Bahār in these verses<sup>2</sup> calls him

سرشته بی دخت لال  
در قلب درکار شاه شیطان عسبان

ای کردی ای رفیق نادان  
ز روز لزل فکته ابله

"stupid, ignorant, befuddled with rebelliousness and

1. Mojtahedi, Rejāl-e Āzarbāijān dar asr Mashrutiat, p.126.

2. Malek ol-Sho'arā Bahār, Divān-e Ashar, vol.2. Tehran 1336/1947, pp 507-508.

since the dawn

frustration, a man whose heart was Satan's workshop, ~~who~~  
~~of eternity the devil has entered focus of rebellion in his heart~~  
~~was a disgrace to the people of Tabriz.~~ Sami'i in one of  
 his poems called Kasravi

وین لعبت بد چقم مکمل  
 بر حبت بتوین اهل دل

کاین سید بی سواد بی فهم  
 بر خاست بتلذیب ذوق دشت

"an ignorant, illiterate Sayyed, who with his lack of thought and reason unfortunately influenced some people, who rejected love and rejected good taste, who distinguished himself by his insults to people of feeling."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of such criticisms, Kasravi believed, and his followers the "Kasraviān" still believe, that many Persian classics such as the writings of Sa'di and Khayyām are socially harmful and should therefore be completely eradicated. For this purpose the Kasraviān hold annual gatherings in which they burn these books. They are of course free to hold their own opinions; but in our view burning any kind of book is an unworthy and foolish action. If a book contains harmful things, a wise reader will not be affected by it. At the same time, in Iran as in many other countries, the Ministry of Education has power to control book publication, and if the responsible authorities consider a book to be politically or socially harmful, they can ban it or restrict it.

1. Adib ol-Saltaneh Hasayn Sami'i, Asār-e manzum yā Divān-e Ashar, Tehran, 1335/1946, Elmi publication, pp 211-212.

Private burning of books is therefore useless as well as foolish.

This was a weak point in Kasravi's character which provoked a great deal of outcry, especially from groups who admired classical Persian poetry. Many Iranian intellectuals today are extremely critical of Kasravi. He would have been wiser if he had limited himself to pointing out the harmful features of certain poetical works without going so far as to burn them; and there was no need to continue this practice after his death. His writings about Háfiz and other poets were already sufficiently critical. This conduct prompted a group to retaliate by **burning** a large number of Kasravi's books at the house of a certain Mr. Eslám-niá. The scene is described in a book called Átesh-e Engheláb ("Fire of Revolution") by Qássem Eslámi. To us such behaviour, whether by Kasravi or by his opponents, was fanatical and discreditable. Kasravi's opponent Seráj Ansári, in his book Nabard bá Bi-Dini ("The struggle against irreligion"), criticizes Kasravi for his burning of books, and then says that all Moslems ought to collect and burn Kasravi's books. Kasravi himself in his book Dádgháh admits that many people had bitterly opposed him because of his book-burning; e.g. 'Ali Akbar Dávar (Minister of Justice and Finance 1927-1936; committed suicide 1936), 'Abdol-Hosayn Hazhir (Prime Minister

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1948; assassinated 1949), and Mohammad Sá'ed Marághé'i (Prime Minister 1944 and 1948-1950). Kasravi nevertheless insists on the rightness of his conduct. He thinks that the twenty million inhabitants of Iran should be kept away from the poisonous books. He says that he ought not to be blamed for burning the diván of the poet Iraj Mirzá (1874-1925), because it contains the most pernicious and immoral matter. These poems of Iraj Mirzá had been published by the Ministry of Education in an edition of 25,000 copies and were distributed all over the country. Innocent young minds were being dragged to degradation by reading them. Kasravi goes on to say that Iranians believe that a poet who possesses special talent for versification must have some connection with spiritual life, and must consequently have better knowledge than an average man. Iranians pay too much attention to the poets. One result is that there could appear poets such as Sahábi Astarábádi (d.1010/1602), who composed 70,000 poems, or Sá'eb Esfaháni (d.1088/1678) who composed 100,000 lines. Kasravi denounces 'Abd ol-Hosayn Hazhir because he had not as Minister of Education prohibited the publication of such books.

Some of Kasravi's enemies accused Kasravi of burning the Qor'án. In his book Dádghá<sup>1</sup> he denies this and says how greatly he respects the Qor'án.

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1. Kasravi, Dádghá, pp 27-28.

Kasravi's book burning was the most conspicuous example of the tendency to over emphasize and exaggerate which he often shows when he writes like a preacher, but seldom if ever shows in his scholarly writings. It was an unfortunate tendency, because it made him appear a fanatic in his own way, when his real purpose was to combat superstition and idleness and fanaticism; but it was not abnormal, as all Iranian preachers and propagandists in those days used violent and exaggerated language because they thought that the people would not listen to moderate language.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## KASRAVI'S STUDIES OF RELIGION

Kasravi did a great deal of research on religious matters. He always held that one of the main reasons, particularly in the East, for the people's backwardness has been their enthrallment to traditional ideas in the field of religious faith.<sup>1</sup> He was strictly opposed to superstition, and in all his writings he expressed strong feelings about it.<sup>2</sup> For the sake of convenience, this discussion of Kasravi's studies of religion is divided into three sections.

The first section is a summary of Kasravi's analyses of different religious beliefs.

The second section gives an outline of Kasravi's personal religious beliefs.

The third section sets forth the opinions of religious spokesmen and other critics, and also our own comments, on Kasravi's religious ideas.

Unfortunately we have been unable to obtain a copy of Kasravi's book Áyin, which is one of his important works in the field of religion. After it was banned and confiscated, all copies seem to have disappeared. I have been told, however, that the ideas of this book resemble those which Kasravi expressed in another book, Varjávand-e ~~and~~ Bonyád.

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1. Kasravi, Ráh-e Rastegari, Theran, 1324/1945.

2. Ibid., p. 8.

## SECTION I

Kasravi's analyses of different religious beliefs.

Kasravi in a book called Ráh-e Rastegári ("The Path to Salvation") strongly criticizes certain sects of Islam, and first of all the Esmá'ilite or Bátenite sect. In his opinion,<sup>1</sup> the followers of this sect were not brave enough to face reality, and did not wish to behave in the way laid down for them by Islam. For this reason they had to find an excuse for their misbehaviour. They said that religious rules, besides having an external form, also have an internal (báten) meaning. This was why they were named Bátenites. Their ideas, which Kasravi calls "Bátenigari", were contrary to reason and common sense. Moreover their behaviour was somehow aggressive. They believed that the people should follow the Emám unquestioningly. Their founder Hasan Sabbáh (d. 1124), who began inviting the people to join his sect, used to say that "the source of every action should be entirely in the hands of the Emám. The others should respect his ideas whatever they may be, and obey him". Kasravi thinks that such blind obedience is utterly irrational and has nothing to do with Islam.<sup>2</sup>

Later in the same book, Kasravi discusses another Moslem group, the Kharábatián.<sup>3</sup> Their ideas were partly derived from

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1. Kasravi, Ráh-e Rastegári, Tehran 1324/1945, p.68.

2. Ibid., p. 73.

3. Ibid., p. 74-75.

Greek philosophy, and their main motto was "we do not know whence we have come nor whither we are going". They therefore believed that it was better to think only of the present moment than to prepare and provide for the future. They also had another doctrine, namely that every human being's future is predestined; and they therefore believed that since everything has been arranged before our coming to this world, there is no need for us to make any effort. Kasravi regards these notions as absurd and morally degrading.<sup>1</sup>

As for the present state of Islam, Kasravi examines it in his book Dar Payrámun-e Eslám ("About Islám").<sup>2</sup> We have before us, he says, two kinds of Islám, the kind introduced by the Prophet Mohammad nearly a millennium and a half ago, and another kind which is the religion of the people in this present age. In fact present day Islam is divided into many branches, Sonnites, Shi'ites, 'Ali Eláhis, Esmá'ilis, Karim Khánis, Shaykhis, and so on. When Mohammad announced his prophetic mission, he set out to teach the people faith in one God, and unity and brotherhood in this faith. He thereby united the beduin Arabs into a great nation.

Unfortunately, through the centuries Islám changed greatly, so much so that now we have to discuss a different kind of Islam.

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1. Ráh-e Rastegári, p. 73.

2. Kasravi, Dar Payramun-e Eslám, Tehrán. 1325/1946.

Today Moslems shut their minds to reality. At the same time the organization and structure of Islam are very unstable. Not a single country in the modern world is a genuinely Islamic country. In most states which are supposed to be regulated by Islamic principles, the laws laid down by God in the Holy Book are ignored or no longer enforced. In their place have been put civil statutes, which are more or less imitated from the laws of European states. The unity of the Moslems, their common obedience to the caliph, and the common struggle against infidelity, which are the fundamentals of Islam, are all forgotten.

Kasravi thinks that the worst failing of the Moslems is their ignorance of the real meaning of their religion.<sup>1</sup> Knowledge of God is essential to religion, but Moslems do not know God in the right way. Nor do they understand the meaning of prophethood and God's message. They think that the only way in which they can recognise a prophet as a real messenger is through his miraculous action and doing impossible things. About the life in the other world they have a complex of confused ideas. It must be realized that knowledge of God and knowledge of His commandments are inseparable. This world is always moving, and human beings are not wise enough to understand the changes which this movement requires. They

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Eslám, p. 5.

value their past life more than they value their future. Kasravi believes that it is God's will that every other century there will be a renewal which will show a new way of life to the people.<sup>1</sup> Moslems generally, however, think that God has failed to make any renewal since the revelation of Islam.

Kasravi then complains that Moslems today do not think about their freedom.<sup>2</sup> In fact the political organization of Islam is unsuitable for modern life. The glorious epoch of Islam is over. Now the great and powerful countries behave aggressively towards the underdeveloped Islamic societies. Religion ought to teach good principles to the people. When a religion ceases to be strong enough to do this, it loses its authority. Today, in Kasravi's opinion, Islam has lost its former strength.<sup>3</sup> It is no longer capable of standing firm against error. Moslems no longer accept Islam as the guide to honest conduct, for themselves and for their nation. They treat the Qor'án as a tool in their own hands, and even change the meaning of verses in it which do not accord with their own ideas. Instead of comparing their own behaviour with Islam, they compare the Qor'án with their own actions. This great book, which once was the moral guide

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Eslám, p. 8.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

3. *Ibid.*, pp 10-11.

for the whole community, today has no real value in people's eyes. This is because the system which Islam follows today is wrong and harmful, as it has been mixed with erroneous and unscientific ideas; according to Kasravi, it is contrary to God's will.<sup>1</sup>

Kasravi discusses Shi'ism in a book Be-khwánand va dávari konand ("Read and judge"), published in Tehran in 1323/1944. For "Shi'ism" he uses a term of his own invention Shi'ehgari, which sounds somewhat contemptuous and may perhaps be translated "The Shi'ism business".

Kasravi begins with a historical sketch.<sup>2</sup> Shi'ism arose in the Omayyad period, after the death of 'Osmán when Mo'avieh fought the Emám 'Ali and wickedly usurped his place, and then made the caliphate hereditary in his own family. Some of the Moslems disapproved of the Omayyad régime, and two groups worked to overthrow it; to an end; they supported the 'Abbásids and the 'Alavids, descendants of 'Abbás and 'Ali respectively. The 'Abbásids were successful. During this struggle the 'Alavids were known as the Shi'eh, i.e. following, of 'Ali. The Shi'ite movement was at first just a political campaign, but later became more complex. A group of Shi'ites who disliked the memory of 'Omar and 'Osmán began to say that 'Ali

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Eslám, p. 37.

2. Be-khwánand va dávari konand, p. 1.

should have been chosen as the first caliph; Kasravi<sup>1</sup> thinks that this was the first involvement of the Shi'eh in error, because in fact history shows that 'Ali behaved very nobly towards those two caliphs and did not deny their right to rule. Gradually the Shi'ites acquired a number of wrong ideas about life and death: e.g. that if a person dies without recognizing the Emam 'Ali he will die like an infidel; that God created the Shi'ites out of a better clay and water; that the meaning of the Qor'án is known only to Shi'ites; that all people will go to hell except Shi'ites and that paradise is for Shi'ites alone. Having adopted such beliefs, they completely separated their community from the rest of the Moslems.

Kasravi goes on to say that another story which the Shi'ites told was about the eleventh Emám, Hasan ol-'Askari.<sup>2</sup> This Emám had not begotten any children, but when he died the Shi'ites said that he had left a five-year old son who was hidden in a cellar and was called the Mahdí. In the future the Mahdi would emerge and lead the people to the better life. The French orientalist Darmesteter has made a study of the Mahdí idea among Jews and Moslems. This idea was first thought of by the Jews, when they had lost their land and freedom, and

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Eslám, p. 2.

2. Be-khwanand va dávari konand, p. 7.

were forced to obey the Assyrians and Chaldaeans (i.e. Babylonians). One of their prophets then announced that in the future a Messiah would appear and save the Jews, who would regain their freedom.

Kasravi thinks that the two main factors in the progress of Shi'ism were the noble personality of 'Ali, and the tragic adventure of Karbalá, which was also important from the political point of view.<sup>1</sup> Shrines were built over 'Ali's and the other Emams' tombs, and people began worshipping at them.

The next point which arises is how Shi'ism grew in Iran. Kasravi's explanation is as follows.<sup>2</sup> When the Arabs conquered Iran, the Iranians felt great enmity towards them. Descendants of 'Ali, being opposed to the Omayyads, came to Iran and settled in Gilán and Mázandarán. Many Irānians supported them and respected their rights. The Buyid dynasty (322/930 - 447/1055) extended their sovereignty from Daylam in northern Iran to Baghdád and supported Shi'ism; they made a great deal of propaganda for it. Under the Saljuqid dynasty (5th/11th - 11th/12th centuries), Shi'ism made very little progress, because these rulers were Sonnites; and under the Mongols, who were not attached to any definite religion,

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1. Be-khwánand va dávari konand, p. 13.

2. Ibid., p. 14.

its advance remained slow. Only when Sháh Esmá'il Safavi rose to power and established Shi'ism as the official religion did this form of Islam take root among the Iranian people (907/1501-1135/1722). Later Náder Sháh tried hard to reconcile the Sunnites and Shi'ites; but since his murder in 1160/1747, Shi'ism has kept its position in Iran till today.

Shi'ism offers a vast field for study. Kasravi sees that, if he is to speak truly, he must state that the defects of this branch of Islam are numerous.<sup>1</sup> The basic principle of Shi'ism is that the caliph should be chosen by God. In the Qor'án however, no such commandment can be found. If we accept that the caliph is to be chosen by God, then the selected person should introduce himself to the people, declare his proofs, and ultimately guide the Islamic nations and save them from their enemies; he should not hide himself. Such an idea, Kasravi thinks, is contrary to reason and also disrespectful to God. The Shi'ites often name the Emáms on the same page as the Prophet, and sometimes even respect them more than the Prophet, because they think that the Emáms are capable of anything and everything. For Kasravi, the shrines of the Emáms are symbols of idolatry.<sup>2</sup> He disapproves no less

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1. Be-khwánad va dávari konand, p. 18.

2. Ibid., p. 30.

strongly of the Shi'ite practice of mourning and crying about the tragedy of Karbalá.

As for the ideas of the Shi'ites about the after-life, Kasravi thinks that these are very childish.<sup>1</sup> They believe that the Emáms will be forgiven for whatever sin they commit in this world, and that such sins will be laid upon the Sonnites. Contempt for the Prophet Mohammad's companions is another objectionable feature of Sh'ism. Sháh Esmá'il, who was full of hatred for the Sonnites, tried hard to increase this sort of anti-Sunnite prejudice. Kasravi particularly disapproves of the Shi'ite practice of taqiye (keeping their religion hidden).<sup>2</sup> It shows disrespect for the Qor'án, which was sent for the people to read and follow openly. The Shi'ites, however, believe that its meaning is known only by the Emáms. They even changed the meaning of some verses of the Qor'án which do not agree with their ideas.

Reverting to the Shi'ite doctrine of the hidden Emám, Kasravi asks how it can be possible that an Emám should be a child and should be invisible.<sup>3</sup> An Emám is a person who appears amongst the people. Furthermore, how can a human being live for a thousand years? God does not keep a person alive so long and does not need such a person to change the

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1. Be-khwáneh va dávari konand, p. 34.

2. Ibid., p. 45.

3. Ibid., p. 50.

world. The belief in the Mahdi is just a figment of the imagination. With it have been mixed some silly stories. It is said that before the Mahdi emerges the sun will rise from the west, that as soon as he starts his career he will be killed by a bearded woman, and that after his death all the Emáms will become alive. This belief in the Mahdi has caused much confusion and trouble. Bábism, Kasravi says,<sup>1</sup> arose when a man from Shiráz presented himself as the Mahdi; his followers are still numerous today.

Kasravi concludes the book by saying that the Shi'ites always use God and his commandments as a tool in their own hands.<sup>2</sup> The Qor'án and Shi'ism are two different things, indeed they are irreconcilable. For example the Qor'án says<sup>3</sup>

إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ

(Verily I am a human being like you), whereas the Shi'ites believe that the Prophets and Emáms have been created out of a better clay and water. They interpret in accordance with their own beliefs e.g. they say

إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَطَرَنَا مِنْ أَعْلَى عِلِّيِّينَ

(Verily God has created us from the highest heaven)<sup>4</sup> The Qor'án says that there is no third person or intermediary between God and man, whereas the Shi'ites believe in mediation.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Be-khwánand va dāvari konand, p. 52.

2. Ibid., p. 49.

3. Sureh 41, verse 6.

4. Be-khwánand va dāvari konand, p. 5.

5. Ibid., p. 10.

Drinking alchohol is strictly forbidden by the Qor'án, whereas today, so Kasravi says, Shi'ites drink alchoholic drinks instead of water. Fighting against infidelity is an essential principle of Islam, but the Shi'ites have forgotten it. The Prophet who made Islam known to the world never pretended that he was able to do miraculous works; the Qor'án says

أَدُلُّكُمْ لَكُمْ أَنَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ

(or is it not sufficient that we have sent down the book to you?)<sup>1</sup> The Shi'ites on the other hand, believe that miracle-doing is one of the signs of prophethood.

In a book Payám man be-Sharq ("My message to the East"),<sup>2</sup> Kasravi emphasizes his hope that Islam will be reformed, not superseded. He first remarks that the progress of science in Europe has obsessed the Eastern peoples.<sup>3</sup> When they realized that the supersititious ideas which have been mixed with their religious beliefs are absolutely inconsistent with science, they began to neglect their religion, and many even became atheists. The East, however, is the home of belief in God. Christianity and Judaism are also oriental religions, and their basic principles are similar to those of Islam. All

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1. Sureh 51 al Ankabut, verse 29.

2. Kasravi, Paymán-e man be-Sharq, Tehran, 1344/1965.

3. Ibid., pp 42-45.

these religions seek to promote the happiness of human beings and to save them from idolatry. Islam is the most perfect of these religions, and nothing new can be added to it.

Kasravi then says that his critics who imagined that he was opposing Islam and that he wished to introduce a new religion were mistaken.<sup>1</sup> He knew the language of the Qor'án and aimed to show its real meaning to the people. Islam is an everlasting religion. All its commands are simple and intelligible. It would be absurd to disagree with Islam and to found another religion. What is needed is a proper understanding of Islam.

Today the world is confused, and the people, especially in the East, are perplexed. They should cure this perplexity by practising Islam. The Eastern peoples ought to keep their own traditions and customs; there is no need to imitate European ways of living. If the Europeans are advanced in the sciences, that does not necessarily mean that they are also advanced in humanity. The world's ills cannot be cured by industry and science alone. Kasravi then suggests five guiding rules for the Eastern peoples:

1. They should conduct their affairs in accordance with their religion.

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1. Kasravi, Paymán-e man be-Sharq, Tehran 1344/1965, pp 40-48.

2. They should realize that European laws are only good for European societies, and that European capability in machine-building does not imply European excellence in legislation.
3. They should realize that the foundation of life is religion.
4. They should change the language of their newspapers, which today are mostly critical of the Eastern way of living.
5. They should stop the spread among them of "Europeanism" and harmful European philosophical ideas.

In a number of articles which have been collected in a pamphlet Din va Dānesh ("Religion and Science")<sup>2</sup> Kasravi contrasts religion with science. He thinks that they are two different subjects, which do not conflict with each other;<sup>3</sup> indeed they go hand in hand. Man's life has progressed from ignorance to knowledge, from incapability to capability. Kasravi thinks that this progress has been the result of both religion and science, and has depended on co-operation between the two. There is no reason why religion and science should be hostile towards each other. Co-operation is the essence of life, and that is what religion tries to bring about. Science alone is not enough. Religion and science should approach our problems side by side.

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1. Kasravi, Din va Dānesh, Tehran 1339/1960.

Kasravi's book Bahá'igari<sup>1</sup> is important because it is a scholarly historical study of the development of the Bahá'í sect, and (as far as we know) the only study of this kind written and published in Irán. While criticizing Bahá'ism severely, Kasravi tries to be objective.

Kasravi obtained a great part of his information from a book Mahdi written originally in French by Darmesteter and translated into Persian by Mohsen Jahánsuz. The idea of the Mahdi (future deliverer) arose among the homeless Jews and first came to the Moslems from the Iranians among whom it had spread for various reasons.<sup>2</sup> At first it was a simple belief, but later it became complicated. The Shi'ites believed strongly that there must be an Emám ol-Zamán (Emam of the Age), and formed the notion that the twelfth Emám is living in concealment and will re-emerge as the Mahdi. Karím Khán Zand, who ruled Iran from 1164/1750 to 1193/1779, struck coins in honour of the Mahdi with the following verse on them:

شده آفتاب و ماه نور و سیم در جهان

از نشانه امام بحق صاحب الزمان

3 ("The sun and moon have become gold and silver on earth, as coins of the rightful Emám, the Lord of the Age").

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1. Kasravi, Bahá'igari, Tahrán 1321/1942.

2. Mr. Peter Avery in his book Modern Iran, London 1965, pp 54-55, quotes Kasravi's analysis of the spread of the Mahdi idea in Iran.

3. Bahá'igari, p. 12.

Before the Constitutional movement, Kasravi says,<sup>1</sup> Iranians were expecting the mergence of the Twelfth Emám at any time; and even while Constitutional revolution was in progress, the publication of a booklet called Siásat ol-Hoseyniyeh at Mashhad and Tabriz led to the formation of groups of "Expecters" (Entezáriyun) at various places.

Kasravi then points out that the Bah'áis arose from among the Báhis, that the Bábis began as a branch of the Shaykhis, and that the Shaykhis were a part of the Shi'eh.<sup>2</sup> The Shaykhi beliefs, according to Kasravi, are a combination of some ideas from Greek philosophy with Shi'ite ideas. Kasravi thinks that Ahmad Ahsá'i (d. 1243/1827), the founder of the Shaykhi sect, probably obtained his ideas about the Mahdi from a book called Kalám ol-Mahdi by Sayyed Mohammad Mosha'sha'i<sup>3</sup> Later the Shaykhi sect split into two groups. Sayyed Mohammad 'Ali (the Báb) from Shiráz, who claimed to be the Ná'eb (Agent) of the Emám, founded the Bábi sect. In 1263/1847 Hájjí Mirzá Aghási, the Chief Minister of Mohammad Sháh, arranged a meeting which is historically important. The great mollás of Tabriz were invited to question Sayyed Mohammad 'Ali Báb. Contemporary historical books, such as Násekh ol-Tavárikh by Mohammad Taqi Sepehr Lesán ol-Molk, and Qesas ol-'Olamá by Mirzá Mohammad

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1. Bahá'igari, p. 12.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

3. Ibid., p. 8. Concerning the Mosha'sha'is in Khuzestán, see p.41 above.

Tonokábuni, shows that the Báb failed in this discussion. When Náser ol-Din Sháh succeeded Mohammad Sháh in 1264/1848, conflicts between Moslems and followers of the Báb caused a lot of bloodshed. The Shah consulted his chief Minister Amir Kabir, and they decided to liquidate the Báb. After the Báb's death in 1257/1860, Mirzá Yahyá Nuri, known among the Bábis as Sobh-e Azal, took his place. The book of the Bayán ("Explanation"), which contains the rules of the Bábi sect, was written by Sayyed Mohammad 'Ali Báb during his imprisonment. Kasravi describes it as full of errors and says that the Bahá'is afterwards tried to suppress it.<sup>1</sup> In this book the Báb speaks about mán yozhero-ho'lláh ("him who God will make manifest"). Later Mirzá Yahyá Azal's brother Bahá'olláh announced himself to be "he whom God will make manifest", and ultimately, Kasravi says, claimed that he was God. Bahá'olláh tried to imitate the Qor'án in a book called al-Ketáb ol-Aqdas, which he wrote when he was living in exile at 'Akká in Palestine. After Bahá'olláh's death in (1310/1892), his son 'Abd ol-Bahá, and after him his grandson Showqi Effendi, accepted the leadership of the Bahá'is.

After this historical outline, Kasravi points out the deficiencies of the Bahá'i sect as he sees them.<sup>2</sup> He thinks

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1. Bahaigari, p. 42.

2. Ibid., p. 51.

that its doctrines are based on imaginary ideas and hallucinations. A beneficial religion ought to combat illusions and try to eliminate them; but Bahá'ism appeared in an age when Iran was suffering from mental confusion and disunity. People belonged to different sects such as the Sufis, Shaykhis, Shi'ites, etc. Bahá'ism not only did not remove this confusion in Iran, but actually increased it. According to Kasravi,<sup>1</sup> Bahá (i.e. Bahá'olláh) did not realize that the Holy Prophet Mohammad was selected by God, and that an ordinary person producing a book or two cannot take the Prophet's place. Nevertheless the Bahá'is think that all the universe will one day believe in this fantastic religion. The most repulsive aspect of Bahá'ism, so Kasravi says, is that Bahá called himself God. He thinks that Bahá disregarded the realities of life, and that all he did was to imitate other people's work. Kasravi is not surprised at this, because Shi'ism was tending towards such a result, having already been permeated with so many wrong ideas.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi calls the Báb and Bahá great liars.<sup>3</sup> Why should they both have thought, he asks, that a prophet must speak and introduce his religion in Arabic? In any case neither of them knew the Arabic language properly, and their books in it are full of grammatical mistakes.

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1. Bahá'igari, p. 55.

2. Ibid., p. 63.

3. Ibid., p. 69.

Showqi Effendi in his books orders every Bahá'í to go into the villages and cities in order to spread the Bahá'í sect. Kasravi acknowledges that the sect has progressed in Irán, and thinks that this is due to the former weakness of the Iranian government.<sup>1</sup> During the reign of Fath 'Alí Sháh (1211/1796 - 1250/1834), Iran had to face the Russians and lost seventeen cities in the north. Later Mohammad Sháh (1250/1834 - 1269/1848) and Násir ol-Din Sháh (1264/1848 - 1314/1896) had to fight with British soldiers at Harát and in the South. The central government lost its authority in the provinces, and people were desperate. Consequently when the Báb began to invite them to his new religion, they had little or no strength to resist. Although Russia or Britain is sometimes blamed for the creation of the Bahá'í sect, Kasravi thinks that this cannot be true.<sup>2</sup> The background of the sect shows that it is a direct product of Shi'ism. Admittedly the Russians later supported the Bahá'í leaders, while the British helped the Bábi leader Mirzá Yahyá Azal who had separated from the Bahá'is and of course they did this solely because they hoped thereby to keep Iran under their control; but in its origin the sect was Shi'ite and Iranian.

At the end of this book, Kasravi says that he feels no special hostility towards the Bahá'is.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Bahá'igari, p. 71.

2. Ibid., pp 89-90.

3. Ibid., pp 92-93.

In a pamphlet Goft va Shanid (Dialogue),<sup>1</sup> Kasravi reiterates his views about the harm done to Islam by the infiltration of extraneous ideas since the 3rd/9th century; about the influence of wrong religious notions, which he sees as the cause of Eastern and particularly Iranian backwardness;<sup>2</sup> and about the need for unity of thought and belief, without which a nation cannot be happy and strong.

Besides addressing his Iranian readers on these themes, which so deeply interested him, Kasravi in 1321/1942, when the second world war was at its height, wrote a booklet, which was translated into English, called "A Message to European and American Scientists."<sup>3</sup> In it he speaks of the danger that science may become an instrument of human misery and destruction, and urges the scientists to turn to religion. Science, he says has no knowledge whatever of such things as heaven and angels. It regards the world as "an automatic installation with everything contained and combined in it". The disagreement between religion and science had ended in the defeat of religion. Everywhere mollás, rabbis and priests have tried to block science, but without success. Large numbers of people have abandoned religion, and in consequence every individual looks for his own pleasure. Science has reduced

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1. Kasravi, Goft va Shanid, Tehrán 1322/1943.

2. Goft va Shanid, p. 8.

3. Kasravi, A message to European and American Scientists, reprinted by the Azadegan, Tehran 1342/1963.

the quality of sympathy and helpfulness to weaker people.

Kasravi then says to the scientists:<sup>1</sup> "You have achieved the invention of new equipment such as railways, telegraphs, telephones, automobiles, construction machines, etc., but they have increased man's trouble, because these wonderful new machines are used in the course of fighting and for the purpose of intensifying it." Science has changed people's lives, but they are not better off than before, in spite of so many schools, colleges, books, and learned men. In the past Prophets arose, and taught human beings how to live in a co-operative manner and introduced rules for a better existence. Consequently the wandering tribes developed into a civilized community. People are always making progress, by two methods:

1. by making tools and getting to know the forces of nature, which is the way of science.
2. by getting to know the true meaning of life and the world, which is the way of religion.

In addition to scientists, we need in this world godly men to inform its people of the secret of life and the way to tranquillity and happiness. Some people say that science has destroyed God; but Kasravi says that the real God is known

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1. A message to European and American Scientists, p. 8.

to us through science.<sup>1</sup> The human being is God's chosen creature. God has created the world for the human being, and has endowed him with a mechanism called "spirit".

Kasravi then discusses the tendency of science and industrialization to produce war and social distress.<sup>2</sup> He appeals to the European and American scientists to realize that war should be fought against evil, not between human beings. He also appeals to them to teach the Eastern peoples useful knowledge, not to send them new editions of harmful books such as Khayyám's quatrains and 'Attár's "Biographies of the Saints". Finally he asks them to see in their discovery of the laws of nature evidence of the higher law of God.

## SECTION II

### Kasravi's own religious beliefs.

Kasravi in his important books Áyin ("The Model"), Varjávand Bonyád ("Basic Holiness"),<sup>3</sup> and Ráh-e Rastegári ("The Path to Salvation"),<sup>4</sup> has set forth his own religious beliefs, which he called Pakdini ("Pure Faith"). As mentioned above we unfortunately could not obtain a copy of Áyin. Kasravi in the other two books summarizes his beliefs

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1. A message to European and American Scientists, pp 24-25.

2. Ibid., p. 28.

3. Kasravi, Varjávand Bonyád, Tehran 1322/1943.

4. Kasravi, Dar Rah-e Rastegari, Tehran 1324/1945.

as follows: religion shows the road to happiness, and consists of knowledge of the reality of life and conduct according to reason. In the following paragraphs we outline Kasravi's main teachings on the basis of what he has written in these two books and elsewhere.

### God and creation

The world is an organism and its creation has not been purposeless. The system which we find in the world is the best proof that this organism has been created by a creator. When we see how the world goes on according to rules which do not change, common sense tells us of the existence of one almighty and all-powerful God.

As for the start of creation, Kasravi thinks that this is not within the range of the human intellect.<sup>1</sup> In this world we are not capable of knowing everything. Man has been trying to learn about God since the stone age, and earlier people used to worship a piece of stone or wood and believe that it was superior to them; they even sacrificed their innocent children for the sake of these wooden or stone gods. Greek philosophers proved God's existence by linking cause and effect; they said that God is the cause of creation. Some said that cause and effect are inseparable, like fire which is

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1. Varjávand Bonyád, p. 9.

the cause of smoke. Kasravi thinks that the Greek philosophers in their discussions concerning God and the world spoke about subjects which are beyond human power to know.<sup>1</sup> Their arguments never led to any conclusion and only caused perplexity in people's minds. He<sup>1</sup> regards mysticism as a product of Greek philosophy. The mystic philosopher Plotinus taught the pantheistic doctrine that we are all from God and will eventually return to God. When this philosophy came to the East, Kasravi says, every individual who adopted it thought that he himself was God.

### Spirit

Kasravi is convinced that man is the highest of all creatures and that Darwin was wrong in thinking that man is merely a descendant of monkeys.<sup>3</sup> Even if we accept Darwin's theory from the biological viewpoint, we must admit that the human being possesses something superior to the rest of the creatures. Man does not consist of flesh and blood alone; in addition to his physical strength, he has the power of thought. Materialism claims that the source of human action is individual selfishness; but we cannot possibly accept this view. Although we come across the man who kills his brother to get his wealth, we also come across the man who on a cold

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1. Kasravi, Nik o Bad (edited by the Ázádegán party), Tehrán 1326/1947, p. 18.

2. Kasravi, Sufigari, Tehran 1322/1943, p. 8.

3. Varjávand Bonyád, pp 21-24.

wintery night gives his coat to a beggar. When a sheep is being slaughtered, the other sheep watch it without showing any emotion; but men cannot remain indifferent when their kind are suffering or being tortured. Man must, therefore, besides his selfish qualities, have some thing else. This, according to Kasravi, is what we call soul, or spirit.<sup>1</sup> Man's soul is the cause of his superiority over other creatures. Materialists, who ignore the existence of the soul, deny that man is capable of bettering his nature. Kasravi, however, thinks that in the human soul both good and bad qualities exist, and that every human being can develop the good qualities and overcome the bad ones.<sup>2</sup> He believes that when man dies his soul continues to live. Life is not just in this world; there is another life, beyond this one, which is more valuable. Man in his physical quality is not free; but his soul is free. The nature of the soul cannot be known; but it has the power of reason and thinking.

#### The other world.

The distinction between soul and body shows that there are two kinds of world, the earthly world and the spiritual world. Man's happiness in the other, depends on his behaviour in this world. There is a connection between these two worlds.

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1. Kasravi, Dar Payrámun-e Raván (About the Soul), Tehran 1325/1946.
  2. Dar Payrámun-e Raván, p. 31.

### Reason

Some groups of religious people, especially mystics, hold that we cannot know God through reason, and have therefore shown hostility to reason. Kasravi asks the mystics,<sup>1</sup> if man cannot know God by his mental power, what other means of knowing God can he rely on in its place? What other means is more trustworthy than the human mind? Kasravi's view is just the opposite of the mystic view. He holds that man should rely on his mind and take it as his guide.<sup>2</sup> There are two ways of human progress. One is through science and the other is through man's spiritual power. Kasravi thinks that these two ways are separate but parallel.<sup>3</sup>

### Religion and Science

The rapid progress of science, and new conceptions of nature's origin and powers, have weakened the foundations of many religions which are based on superstition. A great disagreement between science and religion has arisen. When people learnt about the discoveries made by science, they began to neglect religious beliefs. Kasravi is sure that there is no contradiction between science and real religion.<sup>4</sup> The only ideas which contradict real religion are confused philosophical and mystical ideas.

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1. Varjāvand Bonyād, p. 40.
  2. Kasravi, Dar Payrāmūn-e Kherād, Tehran 1324/1945, p. 16.
  3. Varjāvand Bonyād, pp 66-69.
  4. Kasravi, Dīn va Dānesh (collected articles from Payman and Parcham) Tehran 1319/1941, reprinted 1339/1960, p. 6.

## Irreligion Infidelity

Today, according to Kasravi, the majority of people have got the notion that they no longer need religion. He is convinced that they are mistaken.<sup>1</sup> Religion, he believes, shows the main road to happiness. It is "the language of nature." All reality can be understood through religion. Religion is for humanity, not humanity for religion. Human beings need religion, and religion can never be eliminated from human life.

## Life

Kasravi believes that God's main intention in creating man was to let him live in this world so that he may arrange his life according to his reason.<sup>2</sup> Mystics do not value this world, and materialists regard this world as a battlefield. Essentially the different religions teach that man should make preparations in this world for the after life. In Kasravi's opinion, all of these ideas have misguided mankind.<sup>3</sup> Human life is full of effort. Kasravi divides human effort into two categories.<sup>4</sup> One is man's effort against nature, the other is effort against his own kind. The first category is creditable, but the second one is a cause of trouble. We ought to realize that the individual's happiness depends on

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1. Varjávand Bonyád, pp 78-79.
  2. Dar Payramun-e Kherad, pp 30-31.
  3. Kasravi, Khoda ba mast, Tehran 1324/1945, p. 11.
  4. Dar Payramun-e Ravan, p. 42.

the rest of the people's happiness. That is why Kasravi thinks that harmful books which propagate superstitions and the imaginary ideas of philosophers should be banned.<sup>1</sup>

### Prophethood

Kasravi believes that God chooses a man, and having warned him about the realities of life according to the needs of the time, sends him to guide mankind.<sup>2</sup> Prophethood in itself is a very miraculous thing, which can also be seen as a proof of God's existence. A prophet is an ordinary man like any other in this world, but is superior to the rest of the people because of his unique power and extraordinary talent. The followers of the different religions agree in saying that a prophet is superior to man but inferior to God. They ask him to perform impossible miracles as proof of his prophethood.

In Kasravi's view, this is a wrong thing to do. The fact that God selects a man and gives him instructions can be taken as sufficient proof. While God gives prophets power to guide the people, only God himself has the right to be worshipped. Kasravi insists that God is close enough to his people, and there is no need for any intermediary.<sup>4</sup> God's messengers (prophets) are all in the same high intellectual range, and one is not preferable to any other; but Mohammad is

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1. Varjāvand Bonyād, pp 75-77.

2. Ibid. p. 83.

3. Dar Payrāmūn-e Eslām, p. 37.

4. Be-khwanand va davari konand, p. 30.

the last of the prophets. According to Kasravi, the word "emám" (imam) means only "guide" and is applied to a person who follows in the path of a prophet.<sup>1</sup>

### The meaning of Pákdini.

For his own religious beliefs, Kasravi as already mentioned invented the name Pákdini ("Pure Religion"). An essential principle of Pákdini is that man should face the realities of life and try to solve its problems, and should avoid thinking about useless things. Of course Pákdini is concerned with much more than just the realities of life. Kasravi always held that Pákdini is part of Islam and that its foundation is purely Islamic.<sup>2</sup> It differs from wrongly understood and corrupted forms of Islam, but not from the real Islam.

Everybody is responsible for the conduct of his life in this world; his happiness or otherwise depends on his own initiative. Human beings, however, are created with different physical and mental powers, and live in different environments.

### Man's duties.

Men and women living in a nation, who have chosen a land as their country, should be loyal to that land and try to develop it in every way. The sources of life, according to

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1. Be-khwánand va dávari konand, p. 45.

2. Kasravi, Dar pásokh-e bad-khwáhan, Tehran, n.d., pp 48-49.

Kasravi, are land, water, and air;<sup>1</sup> man should value them and try to make use of them. Every individual should take the responsibility of a job, not merely because he needs to earn his living, but also as a contribution to human progress. Man must try to eliminate wickedness from his society. He must also try to eliminate disease. Every individual should try to live hygienically and look after his health, because only with a healthy body can a person think correctly. Religion gives some instruction in this respect and people should submit to its commands, which enjoin care about personal cleanliness and strict abstention from any kind of alcohol.

### International Coexistence.<sup>2</sup>

Every nation should be free to live its own life in its own land. Patriotism means devotion to one's country, and does not mean hostility towards other nations, which is very far from being patriotic. Nations can live peacefully together just as members of a family can. It is most important that representatives of the different nations should meet to discuss their mutual affairs and to work for peaceful relationships amongst all nations. The main reason why man's life today is not as happy as it should be, in

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1. Varjávand Bonyád, pp 109-111.  
 2. Ibid., pp 50-52.

spite of tremendous improvements brought by science, is that man is ignoring the importance of international coexistence.

### Capital Punishment

Kasravi thinks that punishment of persons who have committed crimes is necessary, but that keeping criminals in prison for long periods never produces good results.<sup>1</sup> In Europe and America prisons are becoming resthouses for criminals. Kasravi divides lawbreakers into two groups.<sup>2</sup> The first consists of those who commit crime impulsively; they should definitely be punished but they can and should be rehabilitated. The second group consists of those who deliberately commit crime out of wickedness and bad character; for them imprisonment, or alternatively, corporal punishment, are necessary. Those whose existence is harmful to a society and whose minds cannot be cured should be punished by death, just as scorpions and dangerous snakes have to be put to death. Deliberate murder, in particular, deserves the death penalty.

### Land Ownership

Land must be cultivated and utilized to supply food for mankind. Ownership of land should belong solely to those who actually cultivate it.

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1. Varjávand Bonyád, pp 154-157.
  2. Ibid., pp 158-160.

### Importance of agriculture.

Kasravi regards agriculture as a peculiarly admirable vocation.<sup>1</sup> He feels strongly that there ought not to be any difference between cities and villages (whereas in Iran farming villages were impoverished and wealth was concentrated in the big cities). He thinks that we must develop the villages and even impose limits on the development of the big cities. God will appreciate those who make use of the land and water.

### Social and governmental organization.

Every society needs a ruler, who should be one of its members, and also a number of elected representatives of the masses. They should communicate with each other about the problems of the people's life. God will bless those rulers who are devoted to their country and who loyally and dutifully fulfill their tasks.

Kasravi lays particular stress on the social duties of government.<sup>2</sup> There must be control over prices. There must also, he says be a limitation on the number of businessmen..<sup>3</sup> The individual businessman's capital must not be allowed to exceed a certain amount. Agricultural lands must be divided and distributed in accordance with the needs of the individual

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1. Kār va Pisheh va Pul, p. 32.

2. Varjāvand Bonvād, p. 143.

3. Kār va Pisheh va Pul, p. 43.

farmers. The use of heavy machinery in factories is not desirable, according to Kasravi, because few people could afford it and many workers might be put out of work by it. The government must appreciate and encourage the efforts of physicians, artists and cultured men. Culture, Kasravi says, means finding out and teaching facts. Every individual should receive education between certain ages. Responsibility for the establishment of schools lies with the government. All classes should have equality of opportunity to study. The government should protect the nation from sickness, and should assume responsibility for looking after invalids and mentally handicapped people. The government should also prevent the people from being lazy. When able-bodied persons are in need, the government should lend them money. Every society needs an organized judicial system, with good judges, prosecutors and police. Obviously a judge must be honest; but it is equally important that before reaching his decision, he should study the case profoundly in order not to make a mistake.

In his book Má cheh mi-khvâhim ("What do we want?")<sup>1</sup> which is a collection of articles reprinted from Paymán, sixth year, Kasravi begins by saying that his main intention is to help to solve the problems of humanity, and in particular of Eastern

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1. Kasravi, Má cheh mi-khvâhim, Tehran 1319/1940.

societies.<sup>1</sup> It is above all important that conflict among human beings should be reduced to the minimum. Civilization does not mean a struggle for life among people, as some Europeans have mistakenly thought. The Eastern countries have suffered for more than a thousand years because European colonialist countries have behaved aggressively towards them.

During the last thirteen centuries, Islam has influenced the Eastern societies. In Kasravi's often repeated view, it was the spread of Greek philosophy to the East which ruined the authority and glory of Islam and introduced a succession of wrong ideas into the Moslem world. He thinks that the most ignominious chapter of Iran's history<sup>2</sup> is the period stretching from the Mongol invasions in the early 7th/13th century until Sháh Esmá'il Safavi's reign in the early 10th/16th century. The mass of the people then lived in abject misery, and because of the wrong (philosophical and Sufi) ideas which were prevalent, they did not resist their conquerors and oppressors.

During the constitutional movement in the early 14th/20th century, Iranians became familiar with European ideas. This familiarity was useful from some points of view, and harmful

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1. Kasravi, Sufigari, Tehran 1322/1943, p. 10.

2. Mā cheh mi-khvahim, p. 30.

from others. Kasravi thinks that the Iranians made five principal acquisitions from the Europeans, as follows:<sup>1</sup>

1. Constitutional government and a change of administration.
2. Modern sciences such as physics and chemistry, etc.
3. Use of modern industrial machinery.
4. An infatuation with the deceptive civilization of the Europeans and a tendency to imitate them in more or less all points.
5. Familiarity with materialism, the greatest error of which is its mistaken belief that human characters are determined by material forces and cannot be changed for the better.

Kasravi recognises that the majority of people do not know the realities of life,<sup>2</sup> and he believes that this ignorance lies at the root of all the trouble among the nations. The people must therefore be helped to get correct knowledge. As already mentioned, Kasravi frequently censures scholars who republished books which he regards as harmful, such as Nâser-Khosrow's Vajh-e Din<sup>3</sup> and Ghazzâli's Nasihât ol-Moluk.<sup>4</sup>

Kasravi remarks that a great number of highly educated people in Iran<sup>5</sup> today have no religious faith. He thinks that this is because they have been influenced by ideas from

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1. Mâ cheh mi-khvâhim, p. 34.
  2. Kasravi, Khodâ bâ mâst, Tehran 1324/1925, p. 16.
  3. Edited by Kazemzadeh Irânshahr, Berlin (Kaviâni press), 1343A.H./1943. This is a Batenite (Esma'ilite) work.
  4. Edited by Jalâl ol-Din Homâ'i, Tehran, (Majles press), 1317/1938.
  5. Mâ cheh mi-khwâhim, p. 80.

Europe. Since the 18th century various European thinkers such as Voltaire have been trying to find solutions to the problems of human life, and their efforts have been quite fruitless. They have not been able to solve the problems of religion. As a result, many people have lost interest in this vitally important matter.

Kasravi then says,<sup>1</sup> "To me religion simply means a way of life. Today the European societies, while following a very progressive material way of life, are nevertheless unhappy. There is bloodshed in the battlefields of Europe. This proves that science alone cannot relieve human suffering; we need something superior, and that is religion in its real meaning. Different religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam accept the idea that religion is concerned with the life in the next world, and not with happiness in this world. Moslem religious leaders opposed philosophy in the early phase of Islam, but were later led astray by it and tried to combine the religious beliefs with philosophical notions."<sup>2</sup>

Kasravi is convinced that although religion and science deal with two different aspects of life, they need each other's support for mutual survival.<sup>3</sup> He repeats that religion is the

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1. Má cheh mi-khwáhim, p. 81.

2. Ibid., p. 91.

3. Ibid., p. 92.

language of nature.<sup>1</sup> There have been frequent conflicts between religion and science ever since the dawn of history; but this has been because people have not known the real meaning of religion.

The basis of religion is belief in the existence of God; and according to Kasravi, this has been undermined by materialism.<sup>2</sup> The growth of materialism, he thinks, dates from the rise of philosophy. In recent times it was adopted by many thinkers; within a short period it spread rapidly, and there was no efficient religion to stand and combat it. Egypt was the first country in the East which received materialism with enthusiasm. Egyptian scholars such as Shebli Shomayyel (d. 1916) and Salámeh Musá (1887-1959) welcomed materialist ideas and propagated them. Although the French astronomer and thinker Flammarion, who tried to refute materialism in his book "After death", did not have much success, Kasravi thinks that he deserves admiration.<sup>3</sup>

In Kasravi's view, we ought to consider the possibility that this world is connected with the other world, even though religion tries to prove the opposite.<sup>4</sup> It is inevitable, he thinks, that one's behaviour in this life should count in one's

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1. Má cheh mi-khwáhim, p. 93.

2. Ibid., p. 103.

3. Ibid., p. 108.

4. Ibid., p. 145.

after-death life in the other world. He believes that the secret of happiness is compatibility between religion and life.<sup>1</sup> As for Islam, Kasravi declares unequivocally that in its present form it is the main cause of the backwardness of the Eastern nations.<sup>2</sup> It has been mixed with superstition, and has consequently led to much confusion. At the same time, the European nations show no desire to enlighten the minds of the Eastern peoples, because they gain greater advantage by leaving these peoples in ignorance than they could by mobilizing armies against them. Islam at the dawn of its history,<sup>3</sup> however, had brought the uncivilized Arabs to unity and made a strong army out of them which enabled them to defeat and conquer formerly stronger nations.

Kasravi then says that the following groups opposed him over religion:<sup>4</sup>

1. Those who were orthodox and in some way fanatical in their religious beliefs.
2. Those who earned their living out of religion.
3. Those who had a moderate amount of knowledge of modern sciences or of Greek philosophy.
4. Those who were his rivals (i.e. in regard to reform).

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1. Má cheh mi-khwáhim, p. 152.

2. Ibid., p. 162.

3. Ibid., p. 178.

4. Ibid., pp 183-184.

Kasravi had often said that Islam has lost its early vitality, and some of his opponents had suggested that it should be restored to its original state.<sup>1</sup> Kasravi not only fears that this delicate operation will be difficult but has a presentiment that it may be impossible. The idea of purifying Islam first appeared in Iran in the time of Sayyed Jamál ol-Din Asadábádi.<sup>2</sup> Later, when Constitutional government was established, some unthinking Mollás disapproved and worked to overthrow this system of government, for the sake of their own interests; they not only failed to take any effective action, but also caused great harm and disaster. Kasravi reiterates that his basic aim is to link religion and the natural sciences, so that through nature we may believe in the existence of God.

Kasravi again discusses these problems in a booklet Porsesh va Pásokh (Question and Answer)<sup>3</sup>. He begins by arguing with two of his critics, and rejects the accusation of being a prophet. He mentions an article in the periodical Káveh<sup>4</sup> by Mr. Hasan Taqizádeh urging Iranians to follow European ways in all aspects of their lives. Kasravi believes that Taqizádeh is terribly mistaken.<sup>5</sup> On the surface,

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1. Also known as Afgháni. He lived c. 1838-1897.

2. Má cheh mi-khwáhim, p. 210.

3. Kasravi, Porsesh va Pasokh, Tehran 1326/1947.

4. This periodical was published at Berlin from 1916 to 1921, and edited first by Hasan Taqizádeh and later by Kázemzádeh Iránshahr. The article referred to by Kasravi appears to be Taqizádeh's article in the first issue of the new series of Káveh dated January 22, 1920, which E. G. Browne quotes in his Literary History of Persia, vol. IV, pp 485-486.

5. Porsesh va Pásokh, pp 1-6.

European life shows a lot of excellence, but deep down the Western nations suffer anguish and do not know how to achieve happiness. Kasravi claims that he has indicated the right direction towards happiness for all existing nations.

Ever since the sciences began to make progress, European scientists generally have in Kasravi's view given up their religious beliefs, because they have no longer been able to accept Christianity which is full of superstition.<sup>1</sup> The Bible and in particular the Old Testament contain stories which do not agree with modern scientific knowledge. Nevertheless anyone who seeks to understand this world and everything connected with it must try to know God.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, in Kasravi's opinion, Iranians today belittle the world by paying insufficient attention to its affairs.

In a booklet called Khodá bá mást ("God is with us"),<sup>3</sup> Kasravi answers one of his followers named Mr. Minu'i who had asked him "How does God help man?" His reply is that God is almighty and that He created this world and everything in it for man. At the same time man must use his brain and gain knowledge so that he may improve his life.<sup>4</sup>

To satisfy his natural curiosity, man seeks to find out

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1. Porshesh va Pásokh, p. 13.

2. Ibid.

3. Kasravi, Khodá bá mást, Tehrán, 1325/1946.

4. Ibid., pp 2-5.

about the different phenomena of nature which God has provided for his use. Man makes progress in two ways. The first way brings him material comfort, the second way spiritual comfort. Although the Europeans can boast of having made many discoveries in nature, of having built advanced machines and of having modernized material life, these things have not brought happiness, but have actually increased the number of humanity's problems.

Kasravi believes that to defeat evil and wickedness, an army of facts and truths must be mobilized instead of armies of soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

In another pamphlet Dar Pásokh-e Bad-khwáhán. (In reply to ill-wishers)<sup>2</sup>, Kasravi states that his paramount aim is not merely to lead the Eastern societies towards a better life, but something higher, namely to guide all humanity towards happiness. Kasravi repeats that he has no intention of introducing a new religion,<sup>3</sup> but aspires to revitalize Islam and purify it as it was at the dawn of its history.

In 1328/1939 a person named Ázádeh wrote hostile letters to Kasravi under a pseudonym Haqiqatgu ("Truth-Teller"). Kasravi published his replies in a booklet Dar Pásokh-e Haqiqatgu<sup>4</sup>. He begins by saying that all the living religions

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1. Khodá bá mást, p. 25.

2. Kasravi, Dar Pásokh-e Bad-khwáhán, Tehran 1345/1946.

3. Ibid., p. 49.

4. Kasravi, Dar Pásokh-e Haqiqatgu, Tehran 1324/1945.

have caused man's degradation instead of progress. History shows that Christianity was very influential in its early stages, but gradually, as the natural sciences were developed, began to lose its authority until ultimately a great number of people became infidels. During the Constitutional struggle, the newspaper Habl ol-Matin published a pamphlet called Resáleh-ye Hosaynieh, which included some articles written by European scholars. Kasravi thinks that it was published merely in order to distract the people's attention from the fact that colonialist societies have tried to take advantage of the weakness of the Eastern peoples caused by their religious beliefs, in order to exploit these peoples as much as possible.<sup>1</sup> There are many examples of this kind. The French writer Gustave Lebon (in the late 19th century) praised the Arab nations, particularly the Syrians, with special reference to their religious beliefs; obviously, in Kasravi's opinion,<sup>2</sup> he did this because France had a great ambition to make Syria into a French colony. Gustave Lebon was only following the same old method used by other European scholars; he admired Islam, although being a good historian, he was well aware that Islam had been combined with superstition. His admiration for Islam was therefore, Kasravi says, dishonest;

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1. Be-khwánad va dávari konand, p. 82.

2. Dar Pásokh-e Haqiqatgu, pp 25-26.

and dishonesty cannot be forgiven.

Kasravi thinks that today there is no compatibility between life and religion. In the Iranian Constitutional struggle, despite the disapproval of most mollás, two great religious leaders Hájj Shaykh Mázarání and Ákhond Khorásání, supported the revolutionaries because they were broad-minded enough to realize that modern life requires good administration by a Constitutional government, and that religion alone cannot fulfil people's needs.

Kasravi then says that in this present age, when there is such great confusion of thought, he has decided to combat various misguided beliefs and ideas,<sup>2</sup> and that God's grace and help have enabled him to endure many hardships and to withstand all his opponents. Meetings and international conferences have been held to discuss religion and find solutions to its problems; but conflicts of belief have rendered such attempts fruitless. One thousand three hundred years ago, the Holy Prophet Mohammad arose and introduced Islam; but only sixty years passed before the people lost their strong faith, with the result that Islam split into many different factions. The historian and traveller Mas'udi (d. 345/956) states that the Arab writer Jáhez (d. 255/868) produced three

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1. Dar Pásokh-e Haqiqatgu, p. 33.

2. *Ibid.*, pp 48-49.

different books, about the Omayyad emámate, the 'Abbásid emámate and the 'Alavid emámate respectively. Kasravi thinks that obviously Jáhez must have been paid by each faction for each book.<sup>1</sup> Such people simply commercialized Islam.

Shahrestáni (d. 548/1153), the historian of sects, describes how after four centuries Islam had become divided and the Moslems had formed seventy two different sects. In this way Islam, a dynamic and at first morally and materially useful religion, became stagnant and practically ineffective.

Kasravi then says that Haqiqatgu and his other opponents could not convince him with their ways of argument. They claimed to be defenders of Islam, but were unable to solve anybody's difficulties. Their silence about these difficulties could not serve their purpose of strengthening Islam. Kasravi believes that the future life of the Eastern societies will depend on reform in the field of religion;<sup>3</sup> if they proceed in the present way, they will certainly face more confusion and even greater hardship.

Kasravi does not think that regular prayer and fasting, visiting holy places, and ritual worship, in other words leading a formal religious life, can improve the backwardness of the Eastern nations.<sup>4</sup> History shows that the Mongol

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1. Dar Pásokh-e Haqiqatgu, p. 54.

2. Ibid., pp 58-59.

3. Ibid., p. 59.

4. Ibid., pp 71-73.

invaders defeated the Iranians at a time when they were strongly attached to Islam and its rituals. Most Iranians at that time prayed regularly to God and were deeply concerned with religion; but they were somehow exaggerating and showing off, as if Islam was a tool to play with. Kasravi goes on to say that liberty and unity are the two great prerequisites for an independent nation.<sup>1</sup> There has never been unanimity of belief among the Iranian nation, and Iran has consequently had to sustain a tremendous struggle through the centuries in order to save her freedom.

Kasravi ends the booklet by reiterating his belief that the natural sciences are essential for a prosperous life, but inadequate to bring happiness to mankind.<sup>2</sup> Man needs something superior to science, and that is obviously faith. A scientist, despite all his information, needs religion to fully satisfy his thirst for knowledge of the universe.

In another booklet Dar Payrámun-e Kherad (About Reason),<sup>3</sup> Kasravi observes that Hasan Sabbáh (the Esmá'ilite "assassin" leader, d. 518/1124) considered the disagreement among the various sects and religions to be due to the inadequacy of man's intellect. Kasravi thinks, however, that it is due to superstition, which has pervaded all the living religions and

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1. Dar Pásokh-e Haqiqatgu, p. 92.

2. Ibid., p. 108.

3. Kasravi, Dar Payrámun-e Kherad, Tehran, 1325/1946.

made them deviate from the path of reason.

Kasravi places the highest value upon human reason.<sup>1</sup> He thinks that Iranians have mistakenly discredited it, particularly the Sufis, who deny its value and importance in human life. For instance the poet Mowlavi (Jalál ol-Din Rumi, d. 672/1273) simply rejects the power of reason when he says

"Love came, and man's reason fled,

Morning came, and man's candle was helpless"

عشق آمد عقل از کار داره شد  
صبح آمد شمع از بیچاره شد

Dr. Taqi Arání,<sup>2</sup> who was a persistent believer in materialism, had argued that man's brain consists of matter and that this matter will change according to circumstances. In the materialist view, human actions are determined solely by material influences and by selfish instincts. Kasravi cannot accept that this is true in man's case, even if it may be true in the case of animals.<sup>3</sup> He remains firmly convinced that God has equipped man with spirit also. All the civilization which man has achieved depends on his brain and power of thought; but although man must obey his reason at all times in his life, he also needs a guide for his reason, and obviously religion could be the best guide in this respect.

Kasravi sees religion not only as the guide, but also as a support for man's intellect.<sup>4</sup> He is confident that if human

1. Kasravi, Dar Payrámun-e Kherad, Tehran, p. 3.

2. The founder of the illegal Tudeh (Communist) party in Iran;

3. Dar Payrámun-e Kherad, p. 7.

[see p.325 below.

4. Ibid., p. 23.

beings use their brains in this life with support from religion, they will certainly solve most of their problems. If human history is a long record of bloodshed on battlefields, that is because man has hitherto never made proper use of his reason. Socialism, fascism, communism etc., are poor consolations for man's unhappiness. Kasravi believes that only a true and reasonable faith will solve humanity's problems and bring happiness to mankind.<sup>1</sup>

### SECTION III

#### Some comments on Kasravi's religious ideas.

Kasravi did a great deal of research in the field of religion, and had a scholarly knowledge of many religious subjects. His principal goals were to combat wrong beliefs and superstitions, and to combat infidelity. He strove and fought for these goals very hard. His success (in so far as he achieved any success) was due partly to his scholarly research, and partly to his ability as a writer, but above all to his courage.

Naturally Kasravi's research centred on Islam and its branches. He studied deeply in this field and was able to find out a great deal about the weak points of certain branches of Islam. If we look deeply, we see that he was fighting

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1. Varjāvand Bonyād, pp 70-74.

against exploitation of Islám. Ultimately he gained a great number of enemies. He was the first person in modern Iran who fought openly and bravely against wrong religious ideas. It is always hard to be critical of people's beliefs, which they have learnt from their forefathers from generation to generation. Other learned men in Kasravi's time were certainly not ignorant or ill informed about the weaknesses of different religions and particularly of different branches of Islam; but only a strong personality like Kasravi could express and publicize these things bravely and persistently. He was so persistent that eventually he paid with his life.

At the same time Kasravi was always loyal to Islam, or to what he regarded as the real Islam. He always declared that the teachings and rules of Islam were acceptable and practical at the beginning, but that as time passed Islam lost its simplicity and became mixed with harmful and superficial ideas. He used to say that we must fight with the "traitors" who have deprived Islam of its original quality, and he himself made a great deal of effort in defence of Islam. For example, among the many books which have been written criticizing Bahá'ism and its doctrines, none has been so weighty as Kasravi's book Bahá'igari. Kasravi also defended Islam against atheistic materialism. He thought that obstinacy and disobedience are

characteristic of human nature, and that experience through the centuries has proved the inadequacy of man-made civil law to restrain people from misconduct. Although man through science is able to conquer the skies, he still needs to believe in a higher source of guidance. Civil law, and police and other governmental authorities, can punish a criminal or an aggressor, but only religious law and morality can influence the criminal's heart and mind. Civil law and moral law will always be separate, and spiritual guidance in this world will always be necessary.

It seems to us that Kasravi was sincerely religious and genuinely anxious to defend and reform Islam, but that his emphasis was too negative. He condemned the superstitions and wrong beliefs which have entered Islam and its branches, but said very little about what the pure original Islam really was. His own teachings, which he called Pák-dini ("Pure Religion") were ethical social and political, rather than religious in the strict sense.

Before saying any more about our own views, we will mention some of the numerous books which have been written in opposition to Kasravi's religious studies and teachings. It seems that none of the eminent religious authorities could refute his penetrating criticisms; in any case, they remained

silent. These books are the work of unscholarly persons, who were probably instructed by certain groups to concoct them.

In a book called Nabard bá Bi-dini<sup>1</sup> ("The Struggle against Irreligion") the author, Seráj Ansári, says that many confusions in people's minds have pulled them towards infidelity, and that all our backwardness is the direct result of our carelessness about our religious beliefs. He recognizes, however, that today the living religions have lost their original vitality and are no longer regarded as authoritative. He considers Kasravi a complete pessimist and negetivist, and tries to prove that Kasravi's religious ideas are much the same as the ideas of materialism. For example, according to Seráj, when Kasravi talks about the unity of God he fails to give any acceptable reason why one God should exist. In Seráj's view, Kasravi tried to teach sociology in the dress of religion. He also says that Kasravi misinterpreted passages of the Qor'án and often made unjust criticisms of the Holy Book in the same way as Jews and Christians had done before him. Kasravi and his followers, being incapable of knowing God profoundly, had invented an imaginary and impotent God. Kasravi had claimed to believe

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1. Seráj Ansári, Nabard bá-Dini, Tehran 1323/1945.

that God is almighty, but had said in Ār Payrámun-e Eslám and in Varjávand Bonyád that God's powers are limited and God's actions are subject to rules. Similarly Kasravi had claimed to believe that the Qor'án is a Holy Book, but had later said that it was invented by the Prophet. His way of reasoning, according to Seráj, is full of contradictions. Seráj then argues that the Prophet was quite capable of performing miraculous actions to prove his prophethood. According to nature's rules, he says, it is clearly impossible to change a walking stick into a dragon; but for God, who is not subject to rules, it is quite possible; so Kasravi's ideas in this respect are not justified. The Qor'án in itself is an everlasting miracle, because all its surehs (chapters) are written in language of such eloquence that no human can produce even a single line resembling it. For more than fourteen centuries the Qor'án has been guiding and enlightening people's minds. The enemies of Islam have tried to discredit it, but have not been successful; and this can be taken as the greatest miracle.

According to Kasravi's views, the Emáms are not capable of foreseeing the future. Seráj accuses Kasravi of having

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quoted the beginning of the verse<sup>1</sup>

لَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبُ

without the end of it. He then himself quotes another verse

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَى مِنْ رَسُولٍ

"(God) is the knower of the unseen and reveals it to nobody except Prophets whom He is pleased with".<sup>2</sup>

Serāj, like Kasravi, thinks that all religions were originally pure but gradually became mixed with supersition.<sup>3</sup> This has enabled enemies to criticize them, and Serāj regards Kasravi as one of the enemies.<sup>4</sup> Kasravi picked on weak points in the Shi'ite form of the Islamic religion and belittled it; but he was terribly mistaken, Serāj says, because the structure of Islam cannot be ruined or shaken by unjust attacks such as his.

Serāj Ansāri then quotes the Qoranic verse<sup>5</sup>

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ

"We only send prophets who speak the language of the people,

1. Sureh 6, al-An'ām, verse 50

2. Sureh 72, al-Jinn, verse 26

3. Nabard ba Bi-dini, p. 48.

4. Ibid. pp 48-49.

5. Sureh 14, Ebrāhīm, verse 4.

to explain clearly to them". The Qor'án illustrates this, according to Seráj,<sup>1</sup> because even illiterate Arab beduins could digest its sayings, whereas Kasravi's book Varjávand Bonyád is written in such an obscure style that hardly anybody can get the slightest idea of its meaning. Today the only reliable religion is Islam. Kasravi and others like him have tried to undermine its foundations by spreading poisonous ideas about it. They certainly have more or less influenced many innocent people's minds. We must therefore work hard to rebuild Islam.

Kasravi's great mistake, in Seráj Ansári's opinion, was to say that a revolution in religion is needed. Religion is not just a tool, but something basic and profound. Kasravi's notion that religious beliefs can be changed with the changing times is quite unacceptable.<sup>3</sup> Seráj believes that all the teachings and rules of Islam are appropriate for the present century and will be appropriate for future generations.

The progress of science during the last two centuries has had important consequences. In the first place, rapidly growing scientific knowledge ruined old theories. Secondly, scientists tried to eliminate religion. Later there was a

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1. Nabard ba bi-Dini, p. 42

2. Ibid. pp 56-57.

movement towards reconciliation between these two, but it soon died down. Undoubtedly science has prevailed. This has enabled unbelieving men to influence the people,, and Seráj counts Kasravi as one of them.

Seráj Ansári is convinced that Islam is the only religion which does not contradict science. The Prophet Mohammad's saying (hadis)

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم ومسلمة

("It is the duty of every Moslem man and woman to acquire knowledge") shows how co-operative Islam's attitude is towards science. This is probably the secret of Islam's freshness after fourteen centuries. Kasravi's claim that the Prophet's knowledge was limited is not intelligible to Seráj, who alleges that Kasravi's chief intention in saying this was to put the Prophet on the same level as himself, because Kasravi was incapable of acquiring all the world's knowledge.

Kasravi had often said that today's Islam is entirely different from the Islam of the past. Seráj Ansári replies that Islam was made known to the people by the Prophet, and

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that if the mass of the people today ignore its rules and spoil it by not practising it properly, this does not mean that Islam has lost its authority. Seraj holds that the security, tranquillity and prosperity of a nation depends on organized religious beliefs.<sup>1</sup> The government ought to establish a regular system for teaching the people the realities of life and truths of religion. As for Pák-dini (Kasravi's religion), Seráj considers it equivalent to Bi-Dini (irreligion).<sup>2</sup>

Prophethood is given by God to a selected person whom God inspires so that he may become the spiritual guide of the people. Seráj accuses Kasravi of being an ambitious man, who tried to allure people by tampering with their religious beliefs;<sup>3</sup> e.g. in the book Varjávand Bonyád, where Kasravi said that just as people accept and trust a doctor's prescription or a scientists' theory in the light of trial and experience, they ought to believe a Prophet in the same way.<sup>4</sup> Seráj, on the other hand, argues that the only ground for trusting a prophet is his performance of a miraculous action. A scientist or a doctor is not called upon to be moral guide to society; but a prophet has the

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1. Nabard bá Bi-dini, p. 128.

2. Ibid., pp 130-133.

3. Ibid., pp 135-140.

4. Ibid., p. 141.

duty of warning the people about the realities of existence and must therefore be an extraordinary human being with unique authority.

Seráj Ansári then repeats the charge that Kasravi often contradicted himself in his writings. Kasravi had said that introducing a new religion and undermining Islam are a disgraceful things to do, but according to Seráj he had showed that he despised Islam by writing against it.<sup>1</sup> At this point Seráj declares, "I have two aims. One is to prove the unreasonableness of Kasravi's judgments about the Qor'án. Secondly, I want to warn the innocent young people and guide them towards the truth. Kasravi has misinterpreted the Holy Qor'án and defamed Islam."<sup>2</sup> Seráj goes on to say that Kasravi's views about the human soul and body in his book Varjávand Bonyád<sup>3</sup> are wholly wrong. It is not possible to separate body and soul completely, because each influences the other. Kasravi talked about the human being's selfish tendency to seek satisfaction at the expense of his own kind and other creatures. Against this, Seráj argues that human behaviour is motivated, not by mere selfishness, but by the will to live, and that Kasravi's judgment in the matter is unreasonable. At the same time Kasravi boasted

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1. Paymán, year 1, vol. 8, pp 12-13.

2. Nabard ba Bi-dini, p. 160.

3. Varjavand Bonyad, p. 19.

about his hostility to materialism and often spoke about the existence of the other world; but this cannot be admitted unless the existence of the soul is proved, and in Seráj's view Kasravi failed to prove that the soul exists. Seráj himself thinks that the soul can be identified in two ways; by experiments, and through religion.<sup>1</sup> "To me", he says, "it seems easier to do this through religion, rather than by experiments. Camille Flammarion<sup>2</sup> after fifty years of experimentation could not succeed in getting slightest evidence of the existence of the soul. Not only Flammarion failed; ever since 1848 materialists and scientists have been arguing about it without any result."

Seráj Ansári concludes by saying that he respects Kasravi for one thing only, namely his belief in the other world, but that even on this point Kasravi's way of reasoning is unfortunately fallacious. A person who called himself a "Guide"<sup>3</sup> ought to possess more knowledge so as to be capable of meeting his opponents in a logical way.

Another opponent of Kasravi named Mahdi Shari'atmadár bitterly attacked Kasravi in a pamphlet Zarabát-e Bi-dinân yâ 'Áshurá-ye Din. (The Blows of the Infidels, or the Day

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1. Nabard bá Bi-dini, p. 178.

2. A French astronomer of the late 19th and early 20th century.

3. Kasravi, Yakom-e Ázar (pamphlet), p. 17.

of Religion's Martyrdom).<sup>1</sup> He asked the governmental authorities to arrest and punish Kasravi for his malevolent and contemptuous attitude to Islam, which is Iran's state religion.

A pamphlet with a facetious title Kajravi-há ye Kasravi (Kasravi's Crooked Talk)<sup>2</sup> by Farhang Nakha'i presents somewhat better argued criticisms of Kasravi's religious views. The author states in his introduction that people today do not care about their religion and that there is no regular propaganda for Islam. Contemporary believers in Shi'ism have no knowledge of their cult. At a time when the Iranian nation needs unity more than ever before, Kasravi's books have misled the people and endangered the national unity. There is a verse in the Qor'án (XVI, 126): "Invite (the people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and preaching, and dispute with them in the way which is best". "We Shi'ites", says Nakha'i, "should obey this straight-forward command, and try to overcome infidelity".<sup>3</sup> He points out that the religious authorities have not made the slightest effort to eradicate wrong ideas from people's minds, and that the teaching of religion to

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1. Zarabát-e Bi-dinán yá 'Áshurá-ye Din, Tehran 1324/1945.

2. Farhang Nakha'i, Kajravi-ha-ye Kasravi, Tehran 1335/1956.

3. Kajravi-ha-ye Kasravi, p. 4.

young people is neglected in present-day Iran. In Nakha'i's opinion, religion means the systematic organization which God has created for man's happiness.<sup>1</sup> He also thinks that while man has to live in a community, human beings or human societies are not capable of devising correct and equitable rules.<sup>2</sup> Man is constantly challenged by two innate forces: his reason, and his instinctive desires which form his animal nature. Since man cannot obey his reason all the time, he is incapable of creating sound rules. Consequently man needs to be ruled by a superior power. Moreover, since the extent of man's reason is limited, he cannot establish rules which are practicable in every time and place. Man-made rules never have any stability.

Nakha'i then remarks that those who speak against religion always ask why, if religious laws are so good, have not the ills of human societies been cured by them?<sup>3</sup> Such persons do not realize that while religion provides guidance to the right path, human beings are not all on the same level of intelligence; consequently some of them absorb and digest religious laws and other remain ignorant. One of the questions asked by nearly all opponents of Islam is whether or not Islam can be adapted to present-day conditions of life.

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1. Kajravi-há-ye Kasravi, p. 9.

2. Ibid., p. 10.

3. Ibid., pp 19-27.

"If we take a brief look", Nakha'i continues, "at the materialist philosophy, at Bahá'ism, at the communist arguments, and finally at Kasravi's views about Islam, we immediately notice that all of them have something in common. They have attacked Islam mainly because they think that it is not suitable for the present age."<sup>1</sup>

Nakha'i then alleges that in fact Kasravi was a follower of materialism and a Bahá'i.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi had said "I do not claim to be a prophet of God", but by calling himself a moral leader for the Eastern societies and showing contempt for all the living religions, he had (so Nakha'i says) proved the opposite.<sup>2</sup> Nakha'i refers to a part of the Ketáb ol-Iqán of Bahá'ólláh (d. 1892) as evidence that Kasravi's views are very close to those of the Bahá'is<sup>4</sup> and that Kasravi followed the same method to discredit Islam. The Iqán states that God guides human beings by sending prophets, that this is done continuously, and that Moslems make a mistake in thinking that God would not commission anybody else to undertake the task of guidance after the introduction of Islam by Mohammad. According to Nakha'i, Kasravi had clearly declared that he was inspired by God when he began to organize Pák-dini.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Kasravi-há-ye Kasravi, p. 30.

2. Ibid., p. 31.

3. Ibid., p. 54.

4. Ibid., p. 56.

5. Ibid., p. 57.

This was definitely meant to be a revolution in the world of religion. Kasravi had said that all the newly organized religions are branches of Islam, and that Pák-Dini is a branch of Islam. He likened them to minor roads, and Islam to the major road which no longer exists. Therefore, Nakha'i argues, Kasravi indirectly called himself a prophet.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking of prophets in general, Nakha'i says that they must have appropriate knowledge to guide people, and must also be instructed by God. A prophet's duties are first to inform mankind of God's existence and unity, then to inform them about the after-life. For doing all this, a prophet must be an extraordinary man. People instinctively ask for miracles from a man who claims to be a messenger of God. In Nakha'i's opinion, no one can deny that the Prophet Mohammad performed many miracles.<sup>2</sup> The Qor'án in itself is a great miracle. All the surehs (chapters) of the Qor'án are written so eloquently that no human can produce anything like them. Needless to say, Nakha'i adds, that earlier prophets such as Moses and Jesus performed their miracles according to the standards of the people's minds in their particular times.<sup>3</sup> In the time of Islam, the Arabs, although they led a very barbaric life, possessed a remarkable ability to

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1. Kasravi-há-ye Kasravi, pp 58-60.

2. Ibid., pp 59-60.

3. Ibid., p. 105.

express themselves eloquently. In these circumstances Mohammad performed his miracle by transmitting the Qor'án, which surpassed all the great writings of scholars and poets in the world of literature. Consequently Kasravi's claim that the Prophet Mohammad did not perform miracles is nonsense.<sup>1</sup>

Another opponent of Kasravi was a certain Mohammad Towhidi, who wrote a booklet on the "Contradictions of Paymán and Parcham".<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, he says, Kasravi stated that Islam has spread all over the world because it was made known through a great book, the Qor'án,<sup>3</sup> and that all people today ought to believe in Islam because it is an everlasting religion.<sup>4</sup> He had also stated that all the world's Moslem nations ought to communicate with one another and eradicate infidelity. On the other hand, Kasravi had constantly stated that there is only one way to cure people and save them from confusion, and that is to familiarize them with a new religion founded on scientific and rational proofs.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore he had stated that in today's conditions it is not appropriate that religious leaders should receive zakát (alms tax) from the rest of the nation and run the state.<sup>6</sup> He had even denied that any living religion can lead nations towards a

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1. Kasravi-há-ye Kasravi, p. 115.

2. Mohammad Towhidi, Tanaqoz-há-ye Paymán va Parcham, Tabriz, 1323/1944.

3. Parcham, year 1, vol. 11, p. 14.

4. Ibid., year 2, vol. 1, p. 6.

5. Ibid., year 5, vol. 6, p. 264.

6. Payman, 9, vol. p. 524.

happy and prosperous life. "How is it possible", Towhidi asks, "that a person like Kasravi, who claims to be the moral leader of the universe, should contradict his own statements and oppose his own principles?" Kasravi's argument about zakát was completely wrong. Islamic states do not obtain funds solely by collecting zakát. During the first six centuries of Islam, the Moslem community's wealth was so great that it more than covered all state expenses, even though a great deal of it was spent by extravagant caliphs. Towhidi is convinced all the Islamic laws are socially beneficial. If people do not make proper use of them, this does not mean that Islam has become weaker. Kasravi had said in Parcham that people need an honest leader because the Qor'án by itself cannot teach them the realities of life, and he had added: "I have often confessed that I do not want to choose a title of leadership."<sup>1</sup> According to the Islamic texts, God introduced the Prophet Mohammad by sending the angel Gabriel from the skies, and Gabriel took Mohammad to the skies and arranged for him to meet God. Kasravi had said: "God is not a body, so how can anyone meet him?"<sup>2</sup> He had also said that God's location is not known, and that God is powerful enough on His own to commission and

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1. Parcham, year 5, vol. 7, p. 286.

2. Tanaqoz-ha-ye Payman va Parcham, p. 24.

inspire a prophet without sending an angel. In reply to this, Towhidi declares that God sent Gabriel to Mohammad, but that in no sureh of the Qor'án is it stated that Mohammad was taken to God's presence.<sup>1</sup> The Qor'án (VII,1) only reports that Mohammad was taken on a night journey. In any case according to Towhidi, God is almighty and capable of doing any action which might look impossible to us.<sup>2</sup>

Another opponent of Kasravi named Mortazá Mahdavi wrote two volumes entitled Kajravigari, Dar Pásokh-e Ahriman, (Crooked talk, in reply to the Evil Sprit).<sup>3</sup> In the first volume, he accuses Kasravi of doing great injustice to Islam and says that Islam not only agrees with modern science but has always favoured sciences.

'Ali (the first Emám) said:

مَنْ عَلَّمَنِي حَرْفًا قَدْ صِيرْتَنِي عَبْدًا

("He who teaches me a word makes it easy for me to be his slave".)<sup>4</sup> Mahdavi in his second volume reprints an article about Kasravi from a newspaper named Haráz<sup>5</sup> by a writer who signed himself only by his initials Gh.S. This man attacked Kasravi in a most malicious and abusive way, calling him a traitor to his nation and his country.<sup>6</sup> He says that Kasravi

1. Tanáqoz-há-ye Paymán va Parcham, p. 26.

2. Ibid., p. 29.

3. Mortaza Mahdavi, Kajravigari Dar Pásokh-e Ahriman, Tehran 1325/1948.

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5. Haráz, vol. 13, 1324/1945.

6. Kajravigari, vol. 2, pp 4-5.

had first tried to satisfy his evil nature by organising a political party (the Ázádegán), and after failing in this, had later tried to tamper with the innocent people's religious beliefs by creating a new religion. "We must now," says Gh.S., "fight and conquer this unfaithful man, and save the people from the danger of involvement with his ideas".<sup>1</sup>

Mahdavi himself also calls Kasravi a traitor and foreign agent, because Kasravi was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society of London.<sup>2</sup> According to Mahdavi, this Society's chief aim is to keep the Eastern nations down by spreading unrealistic ideas and influencing innocent people's religious beliefs, and Kasravi worked under its supervision to try to save the British Colonies.<sup>3</sup>

Kasravi's religious views are attacked by a writer name Qásem Eslámi in a book Átesh-e Engeláb (The Fire of Revolution).<sup>4</sup> He says that Kasravi's motive for denying miracles was personal because not being a real prophet of God he could not personally perform miracles;<sup>5</sup> so he tried to increase his own importance in the eyes of the group of shallow-minded young people who surrounded him through his refusal to accept that God inspired Mohammad by sending

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1. Kajravigari, vol. 2. p. 6.

2. Ibid., p. 3.

3. Ibid., pp 8-10.

4. Qasem Eslam Átesh-e Engeláb, Tehran 1325/1946.

5. Ibid., p. 52.

Gabriel to this lower world. According to Kasravi, the Moslem beliefs that God's Prophet was informed of his duty by an angel and that he influenced the people by doing miraculous things are ideas which no reasonable mind can accept;<sup>1</sup> but Eslámi, persists in accepting them and thinks that Kasravi's denial of them was only a pretext to justify the foundation of his own spurious Pák-dini. As proof of the existence of prophetic inspiration from God (vahy), Eslámi quotes the Qor'án, IV, 162:

وَرَسُولًا قَدْ قُلْنَا هُمُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرَسُولًا لَمْ نَقُصِّهِمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ  
اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكَلِيمًا

"And apostles whose stories we told you before, and apostles whose stories we have not yet told you, and God spoke directly to Moses".<sup>2</sup>

Eslámi thinks that Kasravi could not differentiate between prophetic inspiration (vahy) and ordinary inspiration (elhám), and that he completely denied the existence of prophetic inspiration.<sup>3</sup> In denying it, Kasravi was in Eslámi's view imputing falsehood to the Qor'án.

Eslámi also accuses Kasravi of having said that Islam is not practicable in today's conditions of life.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Qássem Eslámi Átash-e Engeláb, Tehran 1325/1946, p. 63.

2. Sureh IV, al-Nesá, verse 164.

3. Átash-e Engelab, p. 77.

4. Ibid.

He thinks that Kasravi was quite unaware of the real meaning of religion; otherwise he would not have attacked and criticized the beliefs of over four hundred million of this world's inhabitants (i.e. the Moslems). As Eslámi sees it, Kasravi analysed religion in a way similar to the way of the materialistic philosophers,<sup>1</sup> without realizing that only religion can explain the origin, purpose, and destination of life. Every creature knows instinctively how to satisfy his material needs; but religion serves a higher purpose.

At the end of his book, Eslámi has added a chapter consisting of a discussion between the followers of Kasravi and an opponent called Pur Afsar.<sup>2</sup> This man describes Kasravi as a criminal,<sup>3</sup> because (so he says) Kasravi burnt the book Mafátiḥ ol-Janán (Keys to the Gardens" i.e. of paradise) which includes seventeen surehs of the Holy Qor'án. In an appendix, Eslámi declares that Kasravi was assassinated solely because the religious people wanted to punish him.<sup>4</sup> He thinks that Kasravi deserved such punishment, and expresses admiration for the courage of Kasravi's murderers.<sup>5</sup>

Another hostile book, Dar Pásokh-e Kasravián (In reply to Kasravi's followers) by Mir Abu'l-Fath Da'vati,<sup>6</sup> includes an

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1. Átesh-e Engeláb, p. 115.

2. Ibid., p. 124.

3. Ibid., p. 124.

4. Ibid., p. 161.

5. Ibid., 162.

6. Mir Abu'l-Fath Da'vati Dar Pásokh-e Kasravián, Tehran 1344/1965.

introduction by a certain Náser Makárem Shirázi<sup>1</sup>, who gives a brief biography of Kasravi and describes him as a man who suffered all through his life from an inferiority complex. As a result, he says, Kasravi formed some idiotic notions about Islám and particularly Shi'ism, and went on to invent new ideas about religion generally. Kasravi gives his ideas about Shi'ism in his book Be-khwánand va dávari konand. In it he has published some photographs which illustrate superstitions and prejudices, of simple people; but real Moslems, in Náser Makárem's opinion, will be quite unimpressed.

Mir Abu'l-Fath Da'vati declares that traitors such as Bahá (i.e. Bahá'olláh) and Kasravi have tried to ruin the Iranian nation's unity.<sup>2</sup> He thinks that Islam is a dignified religion with no weak points and that the defect in Iranian society is the lack of national well-being. If the standard of living can be raised and every individual can be enabled to earn a good average subsistence, the enemies (i.e. of the religion) will no longer be able to influence and mislead people.

Towards the end of the book, Da'vati contests Kasravi's view that the twelfth Emám cannot have been living in

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1. See p.168 above.

2. Dar Pasokh-e Kasravián, p. 76.

concealment for a thousand years, and cannot be expected to emerge at some future date and overcome his enemies without any army or supporters.<sup>1</sup> Da'vati replies that Almighty God, who has created the tortoise with a life-span of two hundred years, is certainly capable of doing exceptional things such as hiding an Emám for a long time.<sup>2</sup> As for Kasravi's other arguments, namely that the Twelfth Emám should have presented himself during his life-time, Da'vati replies that there are millions of people who are born unknown and who die unknown.<sup>3</sup> Eventually the Emám will overthrow his enemies by the sword of his knowledge and understanding, which is always sharper than any material weapon.

Mr. Mahdi Mojtahedi in his scholarly book Rejal-e Ázarbáiján dar 'Asr-e Mashrutiat has written an essay about Kasravi,<sup>4</sup> which he says that Kasravi's association with Christians while he was teaching in the American Memorial School drew his mind towards religious matters. Mojtahedi thinks that Kasravi intended to devise an "ideal city" (madineh-ye fázelen), i.e. a kind of ideal society whose inhabitants would believe in a form of religion having no connection either with mysticism or with philosophical notions. Such a religion, in Mojtahedi's view, could not

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1. Dar Pásokh-e Kasravian, pp 95-96.

2. Ibid., pp 97-98.

3. Ibid., p.99.

4. Mahdi Mojtahedi, Rejal-e Ázarbáiján dar 'Asr-e Mashrutiat, pp 130-131.

possibly exist or survive in practice. All the religions of the world are in one way or other conventional; they cannot do without traditional beliefs and rituals.

Mojtahedi regards Kasravi as an extremist, who never believed in mental freedom for every individual, but only for those who practised Pák dini (pure religion). Mojtahedi likens Kasravi's religious beliefs to those of the Wahhábites. He attacked oláma very sharply and quite unmercifully, and eventually he paid for this with his pathetic death.

We now revert to our own views about Kasravi's writings on religious subjects. It seems to us that his criticisms of present day Islam and Moslem sects, and of superstitions and wrong ideas which they have absorbed, are very accurate and profound. Admittedly these criticisms are mainly negative and insufficiently positive. Even so they are true, and Kasravi deserves great credit for his courage in speaking the truth. None of the established religious leaders could refute his criticisms. The many books which were written against him have come mostly from inept persons, who do not answer him but simply repeat old dogmas or pour out abuse.

At the same time, we think that Kasravi was wrong to go beyond this stage and start a new "religion" or sect, Pák-dini. It seems to us that there is nothing original in Pák-dini and

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that it is in fact only a collection of ethical ideas. Admittedly Kasravi did not claim that it was original, but regarded it as a branch or "road" of Islam. As we have mentioned earlier, he himself deserves criticism because he does not explain what the "pure" Islam of early Moslem times really was, nor what the purified Islam or "Pure Religion" (Pák-dini) of modern times ought to be. He also leaves other problems unanswered; e.g. are the Qor'ánic laws of marriage, divorce and inheritance wholly suitable in modern conditions, and what should a modern Moslem or Pák-din do about these problems?

Unfortunately Kasravi, when he wrote Varjávand Bonyád, chose the name Pák-dini for his particular religious and ethical ideas. Although modern man rejects superstition and hallucination, and does not follow his religion as blindly as his forefathers did, up to now all attempts to put new religions in Islam's place have ultimately failed. When Pák-dini was introduced, people suspected Kasravi of wanting to ruin Islam and put a false new religion in its place. Some Iranians were reminded of Mirzá Mohammad 'Ali Bab (d. 1267/1850) and his successor Bahá'olláh (d. 1310/1892), who completely broke away from Islam and provoked a lot of disorder and bloodshed. For these reasons Kasravi's writings

encountered a great deal of hostility, and he himself in spite of his great patriotism was denounced as a traitor working for a foreign power. In our opinion, the adoption of the name Pák-dini was Kasravi's worst mistake. It gave an excuse for his opponents to denounce him as an enemy of Islám. There was not, as we see it, any need whatever for Kasravi, who was a scholar and a moral and socio - political reformer, to label his ideas with a name like Pák-dini. He had often said and emphasized that he had no intention of assuming the function of a prophet; but by choosing the name Pák-dini he appeared to contradict this denial. If Kasravi had not made this mistake, his moral teachings would receive more attention. People today have not only ceased to follow religious leaders blindly as they did in the middle ages; they also find it impossible to believe in supernatural things which stand outside scientific laws. A moral leader must therefore try to influence people, not as a prophet or superior man, but through the merit of his teachings. To us Kasravi's moral teachings, particularly in his book Varjávand Bonyád, are important and valuable. One of his principles, namely that land should be awarded by those who cultivate it, has become the law of Iran under the Land Reform Act of 1341/1962. Some of his principles, such as favouring

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country villages rather than cities, and limiting the size of business capital, are not altogether appropriate now that Iran and other countries have seen the need for industrialization; but it is still important that farmers and villagers should be justly treated, and that private monopolies should not be allowed. We also think that Kasravi exaggerated the harmfulness of Sufism, even though there is some truth in what he said, and that he was too intolerant, especially in his burning of books. In general, however, we agree with Kasravi's teachings about private conduct and the need for honesty, sincerity and hard work, and with his teachings about social justice, democracy and international goodwill. We think that a nation which follows these teachings is likely to have a happy and prosperous future.

## CHAPTER SIX

KASRAVI'S VIEWS ON MYSTICISM,  
PHILOSOPHY AND MATERIALISM

Kasravi's book Sufigari,<sup>1</sup> about mysticism (Sufism) and its development in the East, particularly in Iran, is one of his most interesting works. He begins by saying that the world faces many difficulties, which people have to deal with. On top of these difficulties, people have to fight against two ideologies, each of which causes a multitude of troubles. They are mysticism and materialism. In Kasravi's opinion neither of them can be eliminated by science.<sup>2</sup> This is proved by the fact that even a scientist can be devoted to Sufism. The only effective way to get rid of materialism and Sufism, Kasravi thinks, is through the guidance offered by true religion.<sup>3</sup>

Kasravi holds that Sufism came originally from Greece and was founded (as a system) by Plotinus (c.205-262 A.D.), who tried to introduce mystic beliefs in the dress of philosophy.<sup>4</sup> Plotinus, he says, attempted to prove that man is a sign of God and that if he tries to purify his spirit he will eventually be able to find his way back to his origin,

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1. Kasravi, Sufigari, Tehran 1322/1943.

2. Ibid., pp 3-5.

3. Ibid., p.20.

4. Ibid., p.9.

which is God. But we cannot depend on what Plotinus says, for the simple reason that he gives no proof or acceptable reason. Kasravi goes on to say that God has permitted man to enjoy himself in this world;<sup>1</sup> but according to the beliefs of Plotinus and the Sufis, man must try hard to reject all the enjoyable things in life in order to return to God. Some of the Sufis were even more extreme and went so far as to say that man can become a God. Plotinus in his own life attracted some of the people by this doctrine.

During the early centuries of Islam, Greek philosophy, which also included Sufism, came to the East.<sup>2</sup> Some of its followers carried the rejection of worldly things so far that they became absolutely inactive. They were just amusing themselves, Kasravi thinks, with their own hallucinations. According to their ideas, religions were good for simple people and useful to society, whereas Sufism was for a selected class who are intelligent and clever in their way of thinking. In the East, Plotinus's philosophy did not keep its early simplicity. Eastern Sufis began to ignore their duties to society. They never worked to earn their livelihood, and some of them degraded themselves to the extent of begging. Far from being ashamed of their behaviour, they were proud of it. In the early phases of Islam, Moslems

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1. Sufigari, pp 10-11.

2. Ibid., p.11.

had been afraid to accept Sufi doctrines and had even shown enmity to Sufis;<sup>1</sup> but afterwards Sufism increased everywhere in the East, in Iran, India, Iraq, Syria and Egypt. One of the many reasons, and probably an essential one, why the Iranians failed to resist when the Mongols attacked was that the people were lazy; having been spellbound by Sufism, they lost their manliness. Their minds were poisoned by the wrong Sufi attitude to life and this world. During the reign of the Safavids (1501-1722), the Sufis became less powerful in Iran and gradually lost much of the influence which they had possessed before. Nevertheless at the present time we can still see Sufi groups in some parts of India and also a few in Iran. Such, in brief, has been the history of Sufism.

Unfortunately, Kasravi continues, Sufism interfered not just with one aspect of life, but with every aspect.<sup>2</sup> One of the ways by which the Sufis tried to introduce their philosophy or way of thinking was through poetry. A large number of poets who were devoted to Sufism appeared in Iran.<sup>3</sup>

Kasravi finds many bad points in Sufism.

1. The Sufis never agreed on a single definite idea. They were at variance with each other on many points of their teaching.

1. Sufigari, p.15.

2. Ibid., p.15.

3. Poets such as 'Attár, Mowláná Jalál ol-Din Rumi, Owahadi, 'Eraqi and Jami.

2. Life today (and Kasravi strongly emphasizes this point) does not permit anybody to give up trying and to become absolutely idle.<sup>1</sup> Sufis were a group of idlers who used to live unashamedly on other people's charity. Even their best known leaders used to beg. From the financial point of view, Sufis depended on what they could get from other people.
3. Many Sufis remained single and did not get married; this was sinful behaviour, because marriage and child bearing are duties of every normal man and woman, and as a result immorality constantly increased among the Sufis.
4. The major sin of the Sufis, which has also been their most noticeable characteristic, is their outlook on the world. They used to speak of the unworthiness of this lower world and always looked at the difficulties and black spots of life. They were thoroughly pessimistic, and misjudged almost everything.

As Kasravi<sup>2</sup> recognises, we cannot deny that life is full of difficulties, and that in nature there is ugliness as well as beauty, harshness as well as gentleness, bitterness as well as sweetness; but this does not mean that a person should give up hope and be idle. Life has ups and downs, and an alive person must try to remove life's woes. Only through action

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1. Sufigari, p.20.

2. Ibid., pp 23-24.

and struggle can we overcome difficulties and achieve anything creditable.

5. Another abominable habit of which the Sufis were very fond was singing and dancing in a most peculiar way with the purpose of losing consciousness. They thought that if they could make themselves unconscious, the soul would fly out of the flesh and skeleton and that they would then re-join eternity which is God. This very idea was a sin sufficient to degrade them.

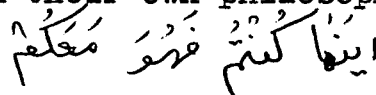
6. Finally, the Sufis thought that wisdom and intellect have no value. They always emphasized the unworthiness of the human mind. Yet no one can seriously deny how precious is this part of the human brain. All the achievements which man has won are the product of his intellect and his wisdom. In Kasravi's opinion, the Sufis can never be forgiven for all the harm they did by denying the value of the human mind.<sup>1</sup> Their outlook and theories about almost everything are inadmissible. Unfortunately, Kasravi<sup>2</sup> goes on to say, instead of doing away with their relics, which are their books, certain persons are enthusiastically republishing Sufi works such as 'Attár's Tazkerat ol-Owliyá, Mowláná Rumi's Masnavi and Jámi's Nafahát ol-Ons.

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1. Sufigari, p.20.

2. Kasravi, Farhang ast yá Nayrang, Tehran 1325/1946, pp 5-6.

Kasravi considers that the Sufis did great harm to Islam.<sup>1</sup> The doctrines of Sufism not only have nothing in common with Islam, he thinks, but are entirely opposed to it. Moslems believe in one all-powerful God, who created the world and possesses knowledge of everything but has no direct connection with humans. Sufis, on the other hand, believe that God and humans are essentially the same. They even consider man to be as mighty and powerful as God, and thus conceive the notion of being themselves God. Although the Islamic attitude to life is entirely different from theirs, they later for their own convenience tried to link Islam with Sufism. At the same time they misunderstood the Qor'an, and used to explain and interpret it in accordance with their own philosophy. There is a Qor'anic sentence<sup>2</sup>


 ("Wherever you are, He is with you")

The Sufis changed the meaning according to their taste and made it out to be "Everywhere I am in you." Since their chief intention was to link Islam with Sufism, they were always puzzling which idea should be accepted. There was also a group of Sufis who were so devoted to 'Ali that they went to the point of giving him the title "God".

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1. Kasravi, Dar Rah-e Siyasat, Tehran 1349/1961, pp 52-54.

2. Sureh 57, al-Hadid, verse 4.

Kasravi thinks that Sufism debased the people's minds in a very significant way.<sup>1</sup> He recognizes that not all the Sufis were wicked or narrow-minded persons; but since the path which they followed was not right, they not only failed to achieve anything worthy but also developed strange and irrational ideas about human life. Their excuse for begging and neglecting their livelihood was that they were supposed to purge the personality of selfishness; but they could not invent any excuse for their laziness. Furthermore, Kasravi says, they were not afraid of telling and spreading lies.<sup>2</sup> In order to impress people, they used to practise magic, like speaking with animals, walking on the surface of water, fortune-telling, making dead persons alive again, etc. Kasravi then says that we must realize that the world's structure has been created by God and that we human beings cannot change or interpret any part of it merely according to our own tastes. If gold could be made out of stones, Kasravi asks, why beg?<sup>3</sup> That would definitely not be logical. Such attitudes show how the Sufis were against God and His creation, just as they were rebellious in many other ways.

Kasravi then reverts to the question, how did the Iranians become inferior to the Mongols?<sup>4</sup> By nature the

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1. Kasravi, Dādgaḥ, Tehran 1325/1946, p.10.

2. Sufigari, p.47.

3. Ibid., p.53.

4. Ibid., pp 56-66.

Iranian nation is brave. Through most of their history, the Iranians have fought against their enemies, but when the Mongols invaded Iran and killed thousands upon thousands of innocent women and children, the Iranians failed to defend their country. Earlier, during the fourth and fifth centuries, of the Moslem era, the Iranians after accepting Islam had become more and more brave and patriotic, because Islam teaches people to fight fearlessly and save their country. At the beginning of the seventh century, when the Mongol invasion took place, the failure of the Iranians was obviously connected with the ideas and attitudes and the philosophy of life then prevalent among them. By that time Sufism had spread all over Iran. The people had become attached to it, and its philosophy had degraded their minds and made them utterly lazy and indifferent to the world's affairs. Having become pessimistic under the influence of Sufism about almost everything, they could not face the facts of life. As a result this nation, which had so often been victorious, failed to resist and showed itself inferior to the Mongol invaders. For four years Chengiz Khán went on killing the people and destroying their beautiful civilized cities, while thousands of Iranian women were carried off as slaves to Mongolia. Yet nobody had the courage to fight and defend the country. The people's mind had been poisoned

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by wrong ideas and above all by the vile philosophy of Sufism, which had eliminated manliness from the national character and had turned Iranians into submissive slaves.

Kasravi next observes that unfortunately the Moslem leaders of that time were not aware of the reality;<sup>1</sup> they not only did nothing to eradicate this poisonous philosophy, but positively encouraged the Sufis by building special schools for them and paying them large amounts of money to develop their philosophy. For instance the Caliph al-Mostanser be'lláh (1226-1242), grandson of al-Náser le-Dine'lláh (1180-1225), built a school at Baghdád for the purpose of spreading Sufi philosophy, and the people regarded this school a symbol of Islamic civilization. Instead of training soldiers to fight the Mongols and urging the people to be patriotic, the Moslem leaders busied themselves with such useless things. Kasravi remarks that Sa'di,<sup>2</sup> who lived during the Mongol invasion, wrote his Golestán without even mentioning this tragic event. The Sufis, Kasravi maintains, took advantage of the Mongol conquest.<sup>3</sup> Most of them supposed that Chengiz Khán was a sign of God's wrath and had been sent by God to punish the people. In reality, according to Kasravi, the Sufis were opportunists.

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1. Sufigari, p.13.

2. Ibid., p.62.

3. Ibid., p.72.

They used to say that if anybody treated a Sufi cruelly he would eventually come to grief. As the nation was most superstitious in those days, and as the Sufis knew the people's weakness, they were able to get money out of them. If somebody refused to help them, they soon showed hostility to him. Shaykh Majd ol-Din Baghdādi (d.606/1209-10 or 616/1219-20),<sup>1</sup> who was a well known Sufi, was killed during the reign of Soltān Mohammad Khwārezmshāh on this ruler's order. Later, when the Mongols defeated the Iranians, the Sufis made a story out of the event: they said that God had sent Chengiz Khān to punish the Iranians for their Sufi friend's death, and that the defeat was a sort of revenge which God had arranged.

Kasravi acknowledges that Plotinus, whom he regards as the founder of Sufism, was a sincere philosopher, even though his philosophy is objectionable from many points of view. Kasravi can find one truth in it with which he agrees, and this is Plotinus's conviction that man is not only flesh and skeleton, but spirit also. This is the only sound part of Plotinus's philosophy, in Kasravi's view. Later Plotinus followed his own hallucinations and made a very complicated system out of them. In this respect he trod in the footsteps

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1. E. G. Browne, quoting Jāmi, tells the story in Literary History of Persia, Vol. II, pp 494-495.

of other philosophers and was not better or worse than they were. Ultimately, however, he went to the point of saying that we human beings are a part of the creator of this world and that there is unity between man and God. Kasravi thinks that Plotinus became virtually a pantheist.<sup>1</sup> According to this part of Plotinus's philosophy, we human beings should refuse every sort of enjoyable things, and become absolutely indifferent to this world; we should keep ourselves in hardship because it will purify our souls, so that eventually we may join God. Kasravi considers these ideas almost wholly wrong.<sup>2</sup> God created all the enjoyable things in this world for the use of human beings, not in order that they should remain untouched. They are God's blessings to man. Needless to say every man should try to purge his character of selfishness. This is one of Plotinus's simple and reasonable ideas, which we can all accept; but even this was afterwards confused and spoilt by his successors. Kasravi ends by pointing out that even today many centres of Sufism still exist and Sufis still live on other people's charity, while unfortunately no one tries to get rid of them. They are still, he fears, as strong as they were before.<sup>3</sup>

Kasravi expresses disapproval of philosophy in a short

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1. Sufigari, pp 72-73.

2. Ibid., p.73.

3. Ibid., pp 76-77.

book Dar Payramun-e Falsafeh (About Philosophy).<sup>1</sup> He points out that the word philosophy has a Greek origin and that it implies that philosophers are persons who have more than ordinary depth of mind. Philosophy developed with great rapidity in Greece, where any new idea was considered a philosophy. Although philosophy began as a simple search for true knowledge, it did not remain in that position. Kasravi asserts that he has never intended to criticize genuine philosophers, i.e. lovers of knowledge, such as Socrates,<sup>2</sup> but in his view the history of philosophy shows that people with the oddest notions were also acknowledged as philosophers.

Kasravi goes on to say that all profound knowledge has to do with a subject; but Greek philosophy did not generally deal with any specific subject.<sup>3</sup> The philosophers never used to experiment or do research. History proves that Greece lost its superiority by becoming involved and obsessed with philosophy. Kasravi thinks<sup>4</sup> that philosophical concepts have vitiated man's intellect to a very considerable extent. One direct legacy of philosophy is logic, which he regards as a useless or at least a not urgently needed subject. He thinks that people are capable of solving their problems by

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1. Kasravi, Dar Payramun-e Falsafeh, reprinted Tehran 1345/1966, pp 6-7.

2. Dar Payramun-e Falsafeh, p.6.

3. Ibid., p.40.

4. Ibid., p.10.

their simple common sense. Anyone who reads the Sharh-e Matalé' (an old Persian textbook of logic) will definitely, so Kasravi says,<sup>1</sup> do harm to his mind. Kasravi states that he opposes philosophy because the different philosophers argued about this world and existence of God without the slightest proof.<sup>2</sup> The Ekhvân ol-Safá (4th/10th century), who used to study philosophy secretly, produced many books which contain their imaginary and unsubstantiated ideas.<sup>3</sup> The philosophers discussed nature, the sky, the earth etc., and conceived notions which later were almost completely rejected by the scientists. Kasravi insists that man ought to try to acquaint himself with useful subjects through which he can improve his life.<sup>4</sup> The study of scientific subjects such as astronomy, chemistry and geology has reached a high level in advanced European countries, because the Europeans have observed and reasoned accurately and their scientists have used experimental methods of research. Philosophy, on the other hand, is not based on experimental research, but according to Kasravi is based merely on imagination.

Kasravi points out that there has hardly ever been any cordiality between two philosophers;<sup>5</sup> even when they lived

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1. This book is mentioned by E.G. Browne in his A year among the Persians, London 1893/, p.147.

2. Dar Payramun-e Falsafeh, pp 12-16.

3. Ibid., p.12.

4. Ibid., p.25.

5. Ibid., pp 48-49.

in similar circumstances they always opposed one another in their never-ending arguments. For example Ghazzáli (d.1111) wrote his book Taháfot ol-Falásefeh to show that a number of philosophers held self-contradictory ideas, and Ebn Roshd (d.1198) retorted in his book Taháfot ol-Taháfot that Ghazzáli's ideas were self-contradictory.<sup>1</sup>

Although the title philosopher was supposed to designate highly intelligent and scholarly men who were lovers of knowledge, it was given during the centuries, so Kasravi says, to the most shallow-minded persons. He is convinced that the basis of most philosophy is hallucination, and nothing else.<sup>2</sup> When Greek philosophy came to the East, the people with their vivid imaginations changed it. They consequently found themselves more puzzled than ever, and this upset the stability of their minds.

Kasravi concludes by saying that the (real) philosopher is a man who can impart vitality and life to the minds of his fellow men by telling them the truth.<sup>3</sup>

In a short book Dar Payrámun-e Jánvarán<sup>4</sup> Kasravi speaks about animals and man's dealings with them. Through the centuries man evolved and learnt<sup>5</sup> how to capture wild animals

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Falsafeh, p.55.

2. Ibid., p.56.

3. Ibid., p.62.

4. Kasravi, Dar Payrámun-e Jánvarán, Tehran 1325/1946.

5. Dar Payramun-e Janvaran, p.16.

and tame them in order to make use of them. Animals have been of great value to man in industry, agriculture, housing and travelling. Kasravi goes on to say that man's way of treating animals has been very cruel and aggressive.<sup>1</sup> He criticizes man for eating and nourishing himself by slaughtering animals.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi finds the world of birds particularly attractive.<sup>3</sup> Some birds are very exotic and wonderfully beautiful; we can keep and breed them without eating them. He also is strictly against hunting birds;<sup>4</sup> if man keeps on hunting them, their race will gradually become extinct.

Kasravi goes on to discuss the idea of some philosophers that the world is an organization of "eater and eaten,"<sup>5</sup> and that weaker animals have to be sacrificed and killed so that stronger ones may be able to exist in the world. The idea has been held since the start of history; but when Darwin and the materialistic philosophers came onto the scene, it was elaborated by them and further strengthened. Kasravi then points out that although the religions have not objected to man's nourishing himself on the flesh of various animals, no religion has required man to eat meat.<sup>6</sup> Kasravi thinks that there are still plenty of fruits and vegetables which

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1. Dar Payramun-e Janvaran, p.18.

2. Ibid., p.27.

3. Ibid., p.38.

4. Ibid., p.40.

5. Ibid., p.58.

6. Ibid., p.62.

man can eat, without needing flesh. He says that although in Islam people may slaughter animals<sup>1</sup> such as sheep, cows and camels, there is really no point in carrying on such a practice; Islam also allowed slavery, but that can no longer be practised.

An anonymous correspondent wrote a letter to Kasravi, censuring him for prohibiting people to eat the flesh of animals.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi replied that man is superior to all creatures, and that just as no reasonable person today will practise slavery even though the Qor'án permitted it, man today should likewise refrain from eating flesh.

In his book Dar Payrámun-e Ravan (On the Soul),<sup>3</sup> Kasravi discusses materialism as a philosophy and outlook on life. He regards materialism as one of the worst ills which have appeared in our world.<sup>4</sup> In the first place it degrades human beings, making them believe that they have no power to improve themselves and to choose better ways of life. Materialism denies the existence of good and evil in the universe. It holds<sup>5</sup> that the only source from which a human being can get knowledge and understanding is his brain and that the human brain is purely material and absolutely subject to material influences from inside and outside. This philosophy

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Jánvarán, p.180.

2. Mentioned in Dar Pasokh-e Bad-Khwahán,

3. Kasravi, Dar Payrámun-e Ravan, Tehran 1325/1946.

4. Dar Payrámun-e Ravan, p.10.

5. Kasravi here refers to the ideas expressed by Dr. Taqi Arani (see foot-note 1 on p.325, Chapter 6) below) in the latter's book 'Erfan va Osul-e Maddi (Mysticism and Materialist Principles).

gives no value to the human mind; according to it, life consists of a struggle, in which people only work to satisfy their selfish wants and must constantly fight one another. No value is placed on the great men who strove to prepare mankind for a better future, such as Mohammad, Jesus, Moses.

In the second place, Kasravi thinks that all the elements of the materialist philosophy conflict with the observed facts of human behaviour. Approval of materialism is therefore a very great mistake. The main cause of humanity's backwardness has undoubtedly been the spreading of such baseless ideas. We cannot accept that all people work only with selfish motives. Kasravi admits that absolute selfishness may be a characteristic of animals, but denies that it is of humans.<sup>1</sup> There is plenty of evidence that the human being is naturally kind and helpful to his own species.<sup>2</sup> What influence other than this could there be in a man's character which would make him take off his own coat in cold winter weather and give it to a poor ill-clad man? Such behaviour cannot be explained by selfishness, but only by man's tendency to be affectionate towards his own kind. The human being is not a mere combination of flesh and bones; he also has a soul. Admittedly among animals the male shows affection towards the female; but this affection springs from

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Raván, p.8.

2. Ibid., p.12.

selfishness, not from real sympathy or affection. Animals take care of their children until a certain age, after which the parents become complete strangers to the children. Kasravi has no objection to Darwin's theory that human beings are descendants of monkeys,<sup>1</sup> but thinks that we must all admit that man is at the same time a special creature of God. Man has been evolved by God with a unique brain and power of reasoning, and cannot therefore be included in the category of animals. The human mind alone makes man superior to animals, because it gives him a very trustworthy judgment. The materialist philosophy, which places man on a par with animals, is absurd and wholly unacceptable.

Kasravi emphasizes that we human beings can equip ourselves with good humour and good character, whereas animals are not capable of doing any such thing.<sup>2</sup> The most poisonous aspect of materialism is its disparagement of the human mind. The mind and the faculty of reason belong to the spiritual part of the human being, which is not material. In our human life, all actions ought to be under the control of reason. Kasravi considers war and fighting to be a direct result of materialism.<sup>3</sup> Millions of young people were killed in the war just because the whole world was moving rapidly towards a materialist outlook.

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1. Dar Payrāmūn-e Ravān, p.17.

2. Ibid., pp 19-20.

3. Ibid., p.41.

While condemning materialism as a false philosophy, Kasravi recognized that many materialists such as Dr. Taqi Aráni<sup>1</sup> had a great deal of sympathy and feeling for humanity; but he regarded their ideas as self contradictory. Dr. Aráni was against capitalism; yet he and many others who opposed it never realized that this opposition was inconsistent with their support for materialism. If they accepted the view that this life is a struggle for survival in which the weaker creature must be sacrificed for the stronger, they ought not to oppose the ownership of capital or factories or large sums of money by individuals. Logically a materialist should accept the motto of the German writer Nietzsche (1844-1900), who said: "Happiness comes to you when you find a weaker man and make yourself superior to him." Materialists therefore have no justification for their opposition to the capitalist system.

Kasravi goes on to say that if man adopts materialism, science will never give him complete satisfaction. According to Dr. Aráni's ideology, the source of all human actions is the brain. Ancient Greek philosophers such as Hippocrates believed that man's soul is located in his nervous system; Descartes believed that the human soul is a liquid, and mystics compared the relation between soul and

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1. The founder of the Tudeh (Communist) party in Iran; he died in prison in 1317/1938. He was a German-trained professor of engineering. He also published a periodical called Donya (World), in which he expressed his ideas. See also note 5 on p.322 above.

body with the relation between two lovers; but according to Dr. Aráni, modern science has disproved all these notions and has proved that the soul does not exist at all as an independent factor, but is only a material quality of the human body. Kasravi thinks that the arguments of Dr. Aráni and other exponents of materialism are not conclusive. It is not, as they claim, an advanced philosophy, because very many modern thinkers reject it. For example, Flammarion (the French astronomer), in his book "The Mystery of Death", writes that if physiologists suppose that the human being's brain is the only source of his vitality, they are certainly mistaken. Many brain operations and experiments have been performed, and the patients have recovered and continued to live normally throughout their lives. There must be something else which rules the human being's life, and which is undoubtedly superior to his brain. The worst error of materialism, however, is its claim that man does and should live according to the desires and needs of his body, with physical self-satisfaction as his only purpose. The materialists, in Kasravi's view, call upon man to act like a mere animal.

In a newspaper named Pand ("Advice"), an anonymous writer contested Kasravi's views on materialism. Kasravi, he said, was moving in a wrong direction. He wanted to deny man's

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instinctive desires and put reason in their place; but modern psychology has linked reason and instinct, and has proved that the human race must for the sake of its well-being try to strengthen its instinctive feelings and fulfil its instinctive desires. Kasravi replies that the "reason" about which such materialists speak is quite different from "reason" as he defines it.<sup>1</sup> When they say that man must try to strengthen his instincts for the sake of his well-being, they are contradicting themselves, because bad and good instincts are combined in every person's character. Kasravi is convinced that if we are to eliminate evil and replace it with good, we need a trustworthy guide to supervise us, and that this guide is reason in its real meaning. Only by the power of reason can man overcome his bad instincts.

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1. Dar Payrámun-e Raván, p.62.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

KASRAVI'S POLITICAL AND  
SOCIOLOGICAL IDEAS.

A number of Kasravi's articles from Parcham have been collected by the Ázádegán party in a book called Engeláb chist ("What is Revolution"?).<sup>1</sup> In the first article, Kasravi discusses constitutional government.<sup>2</sup> He thinks that its basic meaning is that a group of people who live in one country co-operate with one another in all processes of life. To Kasravi this is the best form of government.<sup>3</sup> If it has not flourished in Iran, this has been because of the people's ignorance. Iranians are burdened with a great many fallacious and often harmful beliefs.

Every nation celebrates certain days as festivals in recognition and appreciation of great events in its history. In Iran, only two important festivals are now celebrated: Nowruz (New Year's Day on the vernal equinox), and Constitution Day celebrated on the 4th of the month of Mordád (equivalent to August 5th or thereabouts), the anniversary of the day on which Iranians gained their liberty. Here Kasravi makes a digression,<sup>4</sup> and proves that the day on which Mozaffar

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1. Kasravi, Engeláb chist, edited by the Ázádegán party, Tehran 1337/1958.

2. Engeláb chist, p.4.

3. Ibid., p.8.

4. Ibid., p.6.

ol-Din Sháh signed the charter of constitutional government was really the 13th of Mordád, not the 14th, and that when the calendar was changed (in 1925) the date was wrongly calculated. This is an anniversary which all Iranians should always celebrate in remembrance of great figures such as Behbaháni, Tabátábái, Sattár Khán and many others, who fought for their freedom; but according to Kasravi, nobody, not even the educated classes, seems to care about them any longer.<sup>1</sup>

It must be admitted, Kasravi continues, that the great majority of the people are still unacquainted with Constitutional government and its advantages. The first step which well-informed Iranians should take is to alert the people and teach them the real meaning of government, particularly Constitutional government. Kasravi goes on to say that some people disagree with him solely because he believes that in any society progress should be achieved gradually,<sup>2</sup> while they say that a primitive society needs a revolution; they should realize, however, that a revolution, if it is to be good, ought to take place according to a definite plan, for an unplanned and unorganized revolution will give no result except anarchy. Moreover, in a revolution there ought to be unity among the people. In the Iranian Constitutional revolution, a great number of mollás disapproved of its aims,

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1. Parcham, year 1, vol. 10, 1322/1943.

2. Engeláb chist, p.10.

and were very hostile towards the revolutionaries. As a result, the revolution did not work, and the people were ultimately disappointed. The mollás continued to oppose Constitutional government for years, imagining that this sort of government is incompatible with Islamic laws and altogether contrary to Islam. The fact of the matter is that in Iran Constitutional government in its true meaning did not come into being. The Iranian nation is just as capable of becoming strong as any other nation in the world; but a nation will only gain strength if it has unity, and unfortunately in Iran everybody seems to be an individualist who does not co-operate with others for the improvement of the country. In fact Iranians do not seem to care about saving their freedom. At any time so many different factions arise. A nation can only prosper if it follows a single aim. Constitutional government has had great results in other communities, where its success has depended on the people's patriotism.

Kasravi then defines patriotism as concern for one's own country's rights and honest willingness to work for its betterment and progress in conjunction with one's fellow compatriots.<sup>1</sup> If a group of people think in the same way, they can co-operate and form a political party. Lenin and

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1. Parcham, special volume, year 1, 1322/1943.

his followers, who were aiming to achieve communism, had unity and eventually succeeded in overthrowing the powerful dynasty of Romanovs.

In 1943, during the second world war, Kasravi spoke to a society about the duties of Iranians to their country in the then existing circumstances.<sup>1</sup> Being a profound and remarkable speech, it was later printed and published.<sup>2</sup> He begins by saying that today the Iranians must press for things which they really need. In the first place, the country's affairs must be based on correct values, and the masses of the people must be trained for Constitutional political life. The members of parliament must be elected in accordance with the laws and must discuss the nation's problems and decide how they are to be solved. Sound policies must be followed. Iran needs to be in peace and to have diplomatic relations with the neighbours.

In Iran, great figures sacrificed their lives for the sake of liberty, and eventually achieved their goal, thereby winning a great victory for the whole nation. The Iranians should therefore appreciate and respect their Constitutional government. Unfortunately, being ignorant, they played with it like a toy; and as a result it seemed no different from anarchy. In the older days, autocratic rule by a king or lord could work because men were simple; they faithfully,

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1. In a booklet called Emruz cheh bayad kard, Tehran 1337/1958.

2. Emruz cheh bayad kard, p.2.

followed their leaders and were content with their lot. Gradually, however, men have realized that they themselves can decide their country's future. The question arises, do the people belong to the government or does the government belong to them? In an autocratic society where a king is the sole commander, the people obviously will not make any effort for the good of the country, because they are slaves working for the benefit of one man. In a Constitutional society, the opposite is the case, because the good of the country is their own good. Since all the people cannot take action for the common benefit, they elect a certain number of representatives to act on their behalf. This type of government requires and produces patriotism. In Iran, however, the great majority of the peasants, mollás, etc., do not know the real meaning of patriotism. They have different and contradictory ideas, and cannot appreciate the value of freedom for their country. Although Iran has a Constitution, the masses, being still immature, are not aware of it.

Kasravi is strongly opposed to those Iranians who try to follow the Europeans in all departments of life.<sup>1</sup> They are mere imitators, he thinks. One of their faults is that they classify different forms of government dogmatically, saying for instance, that socialism is superior and more

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1. Emruz cheh báýad kard, p.18.

advanced than democracy, or that fascism is superior still. Kasravi holds that in Iran it is useless to organize different political parties.<sup>1</sup> Since the Constitutional revolution, various people have founded parties, but with no lasting result. He himself thinks<sup>2</sup> that among these parties, the Mojâhedín (Freedom Fighters)<sup>3</sup> were the best, because they strove for liberty and won. They had to contend with the E'tedâliyun (Moderates), who he says always supported Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá, and eventually they defeated them. Kasravi repeats that a nation can only survive and prosper if it has unity.<sup>4</sup> Possession of a strong army does not help unless the people are thoroughly united. He thinks that the French revolution is a good example of how the masses, when united by common feeling, can win victory and freedom.

In his book Mashruteh behtarín shekl-e hokumat va ákharín natíjeh-ye andísheh-ye ádami'st,<sup>5</sup> Kasravi again discusses constitutional government. He says that nowadays, when every individual in a nation is responsible and the people can communicate with one another, Constitutional government is possible. The essential principle of Constitutional government is freedom. Unfortunately in Iran scarcely one person

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1. Emruz cheh bayad kard, pp 18-19.

2. Ibid. p.18.

3. The more militant champions of liberty or "Democrats" during the struggle for the Constitution (1906-1909), and in particular the defenders of Tabriz.

4. Emruz cheh bayad kard, p.27.

5. This book consists of collected articles from Parcham, reprinted at Tehran 1336/1957.

in a thousand is aware of this. Some people complain that Constitutional government is an old-fashioned method of ruling the country and look for a new regime; but they do not give acceptable reasons for their arguments. They do not realize that Iran's Constitution is based on democracy. The difference between Constitutional government and dictatorship is not simply the existence of law, but also the fact that in a Constitutional regime, the country's rights are looked after by the mass of the people. In Iran, however, the people have not been ready or able to make decisions concerning their rights. Kasravi here asserts that one Iranian political party which deserved a good name was the Democrat party, but that even they did not really understand the nature of Constitutional government.<sup>1</sup>

Kasravi always remained convinced that Constitutional monarchy (Mashrutiyat) is the best form of government, provided that its values are followed strictly and in detail.<sup>2</sup> He points out in several of his books that the Iranians did not learn the true meaning of Constitutionalism, but instead positively misused it. Although the change from autocracy to Constitutional monarchy was a great event in Iran's history, the country's progress under Constitutional government was very slow, firstly because many of the leaders were dishonest,

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1. Parcham, No.8, 1319/1940, p.20.

2. Mashruteh behtarin shekl-e hokumat, p.12.

and secondly because the masses of the people were quite unfamiliar with this type of government.

Kasravi remarks that if man led the same life as other animals; he would not need any establishment or organization, but being sociable by nature, he wants to mix with others and live in a community, and this requires law and stable government.<sup>1</sup> For centuries men were deprived of freedom of choice, and had to live a life of slavery under the strict control of kings. As time passed, even unsophisticated people began to realize that this could not last for ever. Gradually the laws and form of government were changed, and the autocratic rule of self-opinionated kings such as Louis XVI, Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá and Soltán 'Abdol Hamid was brought to an end. Kasravi reiterates that the Iranian people must be taught the real meaning of constitutional government, and at the same time be helped to get rid of the harmful and contradictory ideas which now confuse them. He notes that after the establishment of the constitutional regime, Iran became entangled with Russia and Britain, because those two powerful countries were able to take advantage of the Iranian people's ignorance. He fears that the Iranians are not yet mentally mature enough to resist similar harmful treaties.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi wrote these words during the second world war. The

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1. Parcham, No.8, 1319/1940, p.18.

2. Parcham, No.6, 1319/1940.

treaties to which he refers appear to be the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907 for dividing Iran into spheres of influence, the Anglo-Iranian treaty of 1919, the Soviet-Iranian treaty of 1921, and the Tripartite (Anglo-Russian-Iranian) treaty of 1942.

Kasravi feels strongly that Iran's most pressing need<sup>1</sup> is for a single common aim which the whole nation will follow. History, so he says, proves that advanced and developed countries such as Germany, Russia and Great Britain achieved their position with the help of political parties, which toiled and made sacrifices for the national good. In Iran, the tyranny of Mohammad 'Ali Mirzá was removed through the efforts of the Mojáhedín,<sup>2</sup> who came into being with a simple aim and were very active in its pursuit. After them came the Democrats, whose activities to some extent deserve admiration, though they also made mistakes. Kasravi thinks that a constitutional country should be led by a strong party. Unity is essential for a party and can only be maintained as long as the members think in the same way. As regards his action in founding a party of his own, namely, the Ázádegán party in 1933, he states that his basic intention was to guide the masses towards reality. He had first started to publish political and sociological articles in a

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1. Mashruteh behtarín shekl-e hokumat, p.67.

2. See footnote 3 on page 333.

newspaper called Shafaq-e Sorkh ("Red Dawn"),<sup>1</sup> and he thanks its editor Mayel Tuyserkani for letting him publish them in it.

As for the economy of a country, Kasravi believes that it depends basically on agriculture<sup>2</sup> and can only be improved if the land is better farmed. Iran might be one of the richest countries in the world, he says, as it has abundant natural resources, good climate, and fertile soils. In his opinion, Iran ought to be an agricultural state rather than an industrial one. He also recognises that exportation and importation are very important in the economic life of a country, and thinks that in present circumstances Iranians must try to increase their exports and only buy essential goods from abroad.<sup>3</sup> One of the ideas which some people persist in expressing, and which Kasravi considers wrong and harmful, is that Iran is a poor country. "God", he says, "has provided us with all the natural resources, and we can be one of the wealthiest nations in the world if we make use of them."<sup>4</sup> This will only be possible if the people work for the common good; and Kasravi thinks that the real meaning of patriotism is willingness to co-operate. He is sure that ten times more land can be cultivated and that Iran can become one of the most advanced agricultural countries in the world. In his opinion, villages should be expanded, instead of big cities while at the same time the peasant must be provided with all

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1. Its editors were first 'Ali Dashti, and later Mayel Tuyserkani. It was published at Tehran in 1300/1922.

2. Emruz cheh bayad kard, p.36.

3. Ibid., pp37.

4. Parcham, No.4, 1319/1951.

the necessities of life.

Kasravi's sociological and political ideas were original and were not taken from the sociologists, even though he agrees with them in some ways, while rejecting their materialistic philosophy.<sup>1</sup> He stresses that one should have an independent mind and that Iranians should not blindly follow the Europeans.<sup>2</sup> In the old days, he says, man had very limited needs, but in the course of time he organized a civilized life. People exchanged their goods, and so business grew; then they invented money as a convenient means of exchange, and life became more complicated. Kasravi thinks that any kind of profession which does not have a beneficial effect should be suppressed.<sup>3</sup> Governmental authorities should be answerable in this respect like anyone else. Only limited numbers of people who really work should be employed in government offices. Being lazy and idle, in Kasravi's opinion, is a great sin, except in the disabled and sick.<sup>4</sup> He recognises that in any nation the people are not all on the same level of intelligence, and that they differ mentally not less than physically. Every individual's success depends on his ability and talent, together with his effort. The people must be free to choose their own jobs;

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1. Parcham, Nos 53, 54, 55, 1320/1942.

2. Parcham, No.64, 1320/1941, pp 45-48.

3. Kasravi, Varjavand Bonyad, Tehran 1323/1944, chapter 3.

4. Parcham, Nos 32, 33, 34, Tehran, 1319/1941, quoted in Mashruteh behtarin shekl-e hokumat.

there must not be any forced labour. The governmental authorities, however, must maintain effective supervision and must not allow any person to disregard the law. The government ought to distribute the lands amongst the farmers according to their needs. Industrial machines should be made available for the craftsmen. Factories should be established by individuals possessing adequate capital. Civil servants should get regular salaries from the government.<sup>1</sup> The efforts of artists and scientists should be officially acknowledged, and their work should be fostered. Kasravi asks why a vast country like Iran, with an area five times bigger than France and population (in those days) five times smaller, should suffer from lack of sufficient food. He then shows that the lower classes in Iran are undernourished, and calls for a great expansion of agriculture and improvement of the lot of the peasants.

Kasravi emphasizes that the Iranians will have to toil for a long time to come in order to make up for their backwardness.<sup>2</sup> He notes that in great historical events, such as the Constitutional revolution, illiterate people made bigger sacrifices than the highly educated people; this, he thinks, was because their minds were not confused with contradictory philosophical and poetical ideas. Unfortunately in

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1. Salaries of civil servants in Iran used to be very low and often months in arrear.

2. Parcham, vol. 74, 1319/1940.

Iran neither the government leaders nor the people have any idea how the backwardness of the society can be corrected. The only remedy, in Kasravi's opinion, is to educate the people. The educational system must be expanded, but the curricula of the schools and universities must be completely changed. He cannot accept the sentence of Jurji Zaydán<sup>1</sup>

علموهم وكفى

"Teach them and that will suffice."

Perhaps Zaydán simply meant that education is an essential remedy for the Eastern societies; but the type of education must be suitable.

Kasravi discusses education in a pamphlet Farhang ast yá nayrang (Culture or ~~f~~raud?). He declares that every individual has a responsibility to his fatherland. The future generation's prosperity depends on the achievements of the present day. In Iran the people were misled for centuries. Now it is time to wake them up and create awareness in them. He then denounces a number of people who were (and are) considered to be eminent scholars, such as Dr. Qásem Ghani,<sup>2</sup> Mohammad 'Ali Forughi,<sup>3</sup> and 'Ali Asghar Hekmat.<sup>4</sup> The Ministry of Education, founded as a result of the Constitutional revolution, is the authority which has the power to decide and correct the teaching programme. Why should this

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1. A Syrian writer who lived in Egypt in the late 19th century.

2. d. 1959.

3. d. 1942; prime minister in 1925-1946 and again in 1941.

4. b. 1892.

Ministry help Dr. Ghani to publish a book about the Sufism of Háfēz?<sup>1</sup> Instead of paying Dr. Ghani for the publication of such a useless and moreover harmful book, the Ministry ought to provide the schools with modern laboratories.

Forughī had opposed Kasravi, saying that European ideas and the western way of life are spreading so rapidly in Iran that the Iranians must take action to save their culture and get rid of materialism. According to Kasravi, Forughī had argued that the best way of doing this is to teach the people Sufism and mystical ideas.<sup>2</sup> Kasravi's reply is that mysticism and materialism are two extremes of human ideology, and that one of them cannot be a remedy for the other.<sup>3</sup> What is actually needed is that the students be taught how to earn a living. Moreover, in present conditions, Iran requires scientists and experts qualified in modern sciences such as chemistry, physics etc. The schools should also teach the true meaning of democracy and constitutional government; Kasravi regards this as an essential duty of the Ministry of Education.<sup>4</sup>

In another book Dādghāh (Court of Justice),<sup>5</sup> Kasravi calls upon the Ministry of Education to carry out its responsibility by altering the school curricula. The stock-in-

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1. Bahs dar asrār va afkār va ahvāl-e Háfēz, 2 vols, Tehran 1321-1322/1942-1943.

2. Farhang ast yā nāyrang, p.15.

3. Ibid. pp 15-16.

4. Kasravi, Dādghāh, Tehran 1326/1947, p.12.

5. Ibid.

trade of culture in Iran, he says, comprises Sa'di's and Khayyám's poetical works and is full of wrong philosophical ideas. Removing all these and replacing them with accurate and substantial knowledge will not be an easy task. The Ministry of Education must be destructive on the one hand and constructive on the other. Kasravi complains that too often in Iran the government leaders are not honest and follow wrong policies; he calls them "traitors." In particular they persist in spreading wrong ideas and harmfully influencing the young people's minds.

In a pamphlet Nik o Bad (Good and Evil),<sup>1</sup> Kasravi again discusses the confusion of ideas in Iran. He complains that today the moral guides and leaders who ought to be trying to correct the people's minds are themselves even more confused with wrong ideas.

Kasravi again discusses economic problems in a pamphlet entitled Kār o pisheh o pul (Labour, profession and money).<sup>2</sup> Man first lived in caves and was satisfied with a primitive way of life, but gradually became civilized and began to provide himself with better shelter and amenities. As a result, the different professions came into being, and people had to live in a communal way because they needed one another's help. Through the centuries man took big steps to

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1. Kasravi, Nik o bad, reprinted at Tehran 1327/1948.

2. Kasravi, Kar o pisheh o pul, Tehran 1323/1944.

develop his civilization, one of which was the invention of money. Needless to say everybody in a human society must play a useful part; we cannot all live by stealing the fruits of other people's labour. Kasravi here again very strongly denounces idlers.<sup>1</sup> He also condemns certain professions which, he says, are useless and virtually equivalent to idleness: e.g. poetry-writing by sycophants who used to earn their livelihood through flattering patrons, dishonest journalists who publish harmful articles, and merchants and businessmen who unscrupulously raise the price of goods in order to make high profits. Kasravi's severest censure is for the Mojtaheds (top-ranking Shi'ite clergy), who, he says, lead the life of a king without performing the slightest useful service.<sup>2</sup> He repeats again and again that a correctly and efficiently organized government is a nation's most vital need, and that government service must not be a refuge for parasites. Another point on which Kasravi again insists here is that nobody should be allowed to own land unless he works on it.<sup>3</sup> A profession is not a means of earning money, but a contribution to society and a duty to the fatherland. Kasravi then reiterates his view that Iran is vast and fertile, with rich resources capable (so he says) of feeding at least two hundred and fifty million people.<sup>4</sup> Today the Iranians

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1. Kār o pišeh o pul, pp 11-12.

2. Ibid., p.8.

3. Ibid., pp 12-13.

4. Ibid., p.37.

are divided into two groups; a traditional and somehow prejudiced group who follow the same way as their forefathers, and a group who have been influenced by European civilization and by the advanced European standard of living. Both, in Kasravi's view,<sup>1</sup> are extremists concerned only with their own interests and unwilling to take any step for the improvement of Iranian society. Without doubt present-day European societies are very efficient economically, and produce scientists and experts in many different fields; but they still do not know the realities of life. Iranians should therefore neither disregard European civilization completely nor imitate it blindly.

On the subject of money, Kasravi emphasizes that it is only an instrument of exchange and otherwise useless.<sup>2</sup> Gold and silver in themselves are not as valuable as people think. Instead of these two, it would be quite possible to use other metals. Businessmen say that the level of exports must be increased in order to better the constitution; Kasravi agrees with them,<sup>3</sup> but also thinks that the purchase of luxury goods from abroad should be prohibited. He believes that a country's land is its basic wealth and capital, and that the Iranians could live in prosperity if they would make greater efforts to utilize the natural resources of their land. In Iran, he

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1. Kār o pišeh o pul, p.14.

2. Ibid. p.38.

3. Ibid. pp 21-23.

thinks, it is particularly important to try to modernize agriculture and to expand the villages (rather than the cities). He does not of course deny the need for industry; indeed he says that there will have to be a revolution in the industrial life of Iran.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps he did not know how huge the scale of some modern industries has become. In any case, Kasravi thought that the first step should definitely be the improvement of agricultural life.

Kasravi ends with a discussion of the problem of equality.<sup>2</sup> In practice people cannot be treated equally in society. Every individual will get a certain share of wealth in his life, according to his personal ability and talent. Kasravi opposes the socialists in so far as they assert that the government must have control over people's jobs and fix their wages. His own view is that people must have freedom to choose their jobs and that they should be paid according to the nature and amount of their work.

Kasravi begins his book Dar rāh-e siāsat (methods of politics)<sup>3</sup> published in 1945 by saying that politics consist of human relations within a nation and between nations. In Iran, generally speaking, the leaders have had no understanding of politics, and therefore sound policies have not been followed. Although many changes have taken place in the world

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1. Kār o pišeh o pul, pp 35-36.

2. Ibid. pp 38-44.

3. Kasravi, Dar rāh-e siāsat, Tehran 1331/1962.

during the last half-century, in Iran the old methods of politics have not been changed. The mass of the people remain ignorant of their country's political situation and foreign relations. Mirzá Malkom Khán,<sup>1</sup> whom Kasravi admires as an enlightened and broad-minded man, had said: "Iran's position is like that of a ship tossed by the tides in a rough and stormy sea, and those who are in the ship have to steer it so that they may reach the shore." Kasravi thought that this was still true in his own day.

In the history of Iran, Kasravi finds few kings or leaders who had sound policies for ruling the country. One was Náder Sháh (1736-1747), who tried to unify and strengthen Iran and showed Iranian power by conquering India. Another was Karim Khán Zand (1750-1779), who was a good ruler, but lacked foresight and did not plan for the future. Kasravi considers Amir Kabir (d. 1851)<sup>2</sup> to have been one of the few really foreseeing politicians in Iran's history.

Kasravi thinks that in a monarchical system of government, the king should not have the right to make decisions affecting the nation's destiny, but that the people them-

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1. Mirzá Malkom Khán, Názem ol-Dowleh (1834-1908). After serving as Minister to Great Britain, he resigned and published the influential newspaper Qanun in London (1891-1892). He also wrote plays. He was of Armenian origin from Esfahan. (Taken from Dar rah-e siyasat, p.36).
  2. He became chief minister in 1848 at the beginning of Násir ol-Din Shah's reign, and attempted to reform the finances and the armed forces. He also founded the Dar ol-Fonun, Iran's first modern educational institution. In 1851 his opponents persuaded the Shah to dismiss him and have him murdered in the bath of Fin near Kashan. (Dar rah-e siyasat, pp 7-9).

selves should make such decisions. At the time of the Constitutional revolution there were a number of able politicians in Iran, who knew the country's position and thought out several policies for it. They believed that if the system of government could be changed by elimination of the autocracy and establishment of constitutional rule, Iran would within a few years become as prosperous as Germany, France or England. The Iranians, however, had no understanding of constitutional government, and were consequently unable to make proper use of it. Indeed for a long time they suffered many disadvantages from it. Dishonest leaders began to misuse the constitutional system for personal gain. The situation, instead of becoming better, became worse.

Kasravi's own ideas about the right policies for Iran were based on three principles.

1. The people's minds must first be enlightened and brought out of darkness through a higher standard of education.<sup>1</sup>
2. The country's difficulties must be faced courageously, and the neighbouring great powers, England and Russia, must be treated as equals of Iran (not as masters).
3. Corruption and immorality must be combatted, and all Iranians really interested in reforming the country's life must work together.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Dar rāh-e siāsat, p.18.

2. Ibid., p.20.

Kasravi advises the Iranians to take a broad view of their politics. What is most needed in modern conditions is a great effort to build up a strong Iran; otherwise the nation will be unable to face its difficulties and fight for its rights. If all the people of Iran could communicate with one another, they would not feel so weak, because patriotism is in the Iranian's nature. In the outside world, great revolutions had occurred and new ideas of communism and socialism were spreading; but Iranians did not know where they stood because they had no definite ideas about the policies needed in their country.

Kasravi goes on to say that democracy brought new ideas to the world, and that in Iran efforts were made to promote democracy, but unfortunately with unsatisfactory results. Iranians have not yet achieved anything of value from democracy. History will nevertheless remember the men who struggled for the cause of freedom and decent government in Iran, such as Sayyed Mohammad Khiábáni, Mirzá Kuchek Khán Jangali,<sup>1</sup> and Colonel Mohammad Taqi Khán;<sup>2</sup> they earnestly

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1. A Gilaki with a religious education who formed a society called Ettehad-e Eslam to free Iran from foreign interference. He also championed the peasants against oppressive landowners. He first rebelled in Gilan in 1915. After Russian Bolshevik troops had landed in Gilan, he proclaimed a Soviet republic in June 1920. At first he received help from the Bolsheviks, but later he quarrelled with them. He was defeated and died in December 1921.
  2. A Gendarmerie officer who (like many other Gendarmerie officers) was an ardent Democrat and reformist. He objected to the amalgamation of the Gendarmerie and Cossacks into the new Iranian army, and rebelled in June 1921, but was defeated and killed. (Dar ráh-e siásat, pp 35-37.)

wished to improve the country's situation, and tried their hardest, but did not succeed.

In Kasravi's view, differences of religious belief and conflicts over such differences, which have been very common in Iran, were one of the reasons for the nation's weakness. Iranians have a defensive manner towards one another, largely because they hold different religious beliefs and attitudes. Unless they give up this mutual strife, matters will not improve.

Kasravi stresses very strongly that education must be made available for the masses of the people. He notes that in the Iranian Constitutional revolution ninety per cent of the revolutionaries were from the uneducated classes, and is sure that the ways of thinking of these classes are generally better than those of the educated people. This is because education in its true meaning has not been provided. In Iran the educated man's mind has been filled with so many useless and sometimes harmful notions, that he becomes hesitant and cannot decide what ideas to adopt.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, while it is essential that education should be spread throughout the whole nation, it is even more important that it should be of a suitable type; otherwise it will poison the people's minds. Iranians must learn the real meaning of work: industrial work, agricultural work, and all

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1. Dar rāh-e siāsat, pp 39-40.

other kinds of work. When the members of the nation know their duties in the society and are capable of observing the rules of their work, the leaders will no longer have such difficulty in leading them. The function of a government is to open the people's eyes and show them the truth as it affects the different aspects of their lives.

Kasravi then turns to international politics.<sup>1</sup> Today, he wrote in 1945, world affairs are dominated by three powerful countries, Russia, England and America. As a result of historical events, Russia became Iran's neighbour in the north and England in the south. Not knowing which of these neighbours is their enemy and which their friend, Iranians are not sure what is the best or least harmful foreign policy for their country. They constantly puzzle over the problem, but reach no conclusion. Another difficulty is that the two neighbouring powers have different political ideologies; Russia is a communist state, England follows capitalism, and they compete with each other. Iran's situation today could be improved either by a group of capable leaders or a dictator. There are no other ways, so Kasravi says.<sup>2</sup> Liberty means that a nation is free to choose its own way of living.<sup>3</sup> It is not an imaginary thing, but

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1. Dar rāh-e siāsat, p.77.

2. Ibid., p.79.

3. Ibid., p.83.

something which has many practical results. A free man can live in his own way and make his own decisions, while a slave must obey somebody else's orders and has no freedom of choice. Liberty is a very precious possession. Iranians must be ready to fight in defence of the liberty and integrity of Iran and all its territories, because it is their own country and its liberty is their own freedom. "There is no need to fear Russia's or England's taking our land from us", Kasravi says;<sup>1</sup> "if we maintain stability of government, they will not then be able to exploit us and infringe upon our liberty." He thought that since the end of the second world war Russia and England had become friendly and that they would not want to spoil this friendship. It seemed to him that this state of affairs gave Iran the best opportunity for centuries to improve her situation. Iranians must stand and behave as equals with the Russians and with the English. At the same time they must not show any preference for one of these two foreign states over the other.

Kasravi remarks that there are still some Iranians who have no respect for Constitutional authority, who evade paying taxes, and who disobey regulations.<sup>2</sup> The government must enforce the law and must at the same time improve the economy and the people's standard of living. Kasravi then

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1. Dar rāh-e siāsat, p.92.

2. Ibid.

says that socialism was first conceived by humanitarian thinkers anxious to help the lower classes of society, and is today rapidly spreading in the world.<sup>1</sup> In England, he thought, the Labour party was being very successful. He considers the economic and social objectives of the socialists to be generally acceptable, but cannot approve of everything that they say.<sup>2</sup> According to the socialists, the government ought to decide almost all matters; in Kasravi's opinion, the people ought to be free to decide their way of life but at the same time the government ought to supervise them.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, the socialists think that all capital should be in the hands of the government, whereas Kasravi suggests that to a certain extent capital should be left in the hands of the people, so that they may make use of it. Thirdly, the socialists think that all land should be the property of the government, in which case all farmers would become labourers working for the government. Kasravi thinks that private landownership is a very natural thing and should not be abolished.<sup>4</sup> While expressing sympathy for the idea of socialism, Kasravi says that his defence of this theory of government does not mean that he is taking Russia's side.<sup>5</sup>

Kasravi next passes to the subject of international

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1. Dar rah-e siásat, p.107.

2. Ibid., p.108.

3. Ibid., p.110.

4. Ibid., p.64.

5. Ibid., p.109.

conflicts. He notes the beginning of an effort to aid the underdeveloped countries. He does not think that war is a part of human nature. If a dispute between two states arises, they can always settle it without fighting or using force; they can take it to a court with honest judges, who can decide and suggest a reasonable way to end the difficulty. The United Nations Organization should be a very useful forum for solving international problems. The idea of establishing such a meeting place for all the nations seems to Kasravi altogether praiseworthy.<sup>1</sup>

Kasravi then observes that even today the majority of politicians think in a very materialistic way.<sup>2</sup> They assume that their own country must become strong in order to overcome other countries. After six years of fighting and destruction and untold thousands of deaths (in the 1939-1945 war), Europe was still suffering from hunger. As long as conflict continues to be the basis of international life, no improvement on the present state of affairs is likely to be achieved. People are living in constant fear of a third world war, which will be atomic, and will probably destroy the human race altogether. The need for an international seat of justice is therefore urgent, but obviously this wish will not be brought to reality without difficulties.

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1. Dar ráh-e siásat, pp.116-127.

2. Ibid., p.119.

Meanwhile every nation ought to be considerate towards the other nations.

One day, Kasravi continues, an international government for all the world will perhaps<sup>be</sup> set up.<sup>1</sup> Today, however, there are conflicts between West and East, between different races, and between different nations. These conflicts ought to be solved decently.

Kasravi discusses communism and socialism in his book Sarnevesht-e Irán cheh khwâhad bud (Iran's destiny).<sup>2</sup> He begins by saying that communism and socialism seek to bring welfare to the working classes, and if there are defects in communism, that does not mean that this system of government is completely wrong. It has no intrinsic contradiction with religion, he thinks. Kasravi then speaks about the Tudeh (Masses) party<sup>3</sup> in Iran. He considers this party harmful to Iran in many ways, and finds numerous defects in its structure and policy.

1. The Tudeh party has not been organized in response to the needs of Iranians.<sup>4</sup> Its leaders have been calling for economic improvements in Iran only in order to build up the party's connections among people in different walks of life.

2. The Tudeh party does not have a sound (foreign) policy.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Dar rah-e siâsat, p.122.

2. Kasravi, Sarnevesht-e Irán cheh khwâhad bud, Tehran 1324/1945.

3. A leftist party in Iran, founded in October 1941. See p.325,

4. Sarnevesht-e Iran cheh khwâhad bud, p.10.

5. Ibid. p.15.

Its leaders say that Iran ought to move towards Russia and be as friendly with Russia as with England, and that Russia ought to be as influential in Iran as England is. Kasravi thinks that this attitude of the Tudeh leaders is completely wrong. Why should Iranians be anxious about a powerful state like Russia? Why should not they eliminate English influence in their country? For this task Iran needs strong-minded politicians. If Russia and England again become powerful and influential in Iran, eventually something like the agreement of 1907<sup>1</sup> will again be the result. Therefore this Tudeh suggestion cannot possibly be a remedy for Iran's ills.

Kasravi goes on to say: "There is a lot of exaggeration about English political influence in Iran. If anything goes wrong, we think that it is due to England's policy. This attitude has become part of our politicians' nature. They want to blame others for every mistake. The Tudeh party is most persistent in this respect. They say that Rezá Sháh the Great was a tool in the English government's hand.<sup>2</sup> In fact they deny what he did for this country. He was one of the most progressive men whom Iran has seen. He organized an efficient army for Iran, bettered the conditions of life, freed the women, and brought the different tribes under the

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1. The Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 by which the two powers divided Iran into a Russian "sphere of influence" in the north, a British "sphere of influence" in the south, and a "neutral zone" in the centre.

2. Sarnevesht-e Irán cheh khwâhad bud, p.23.

central government's rule. All that he did was against the wishes of the English government." "We Iranians," Kasravi continues,<sup>1</sup> "do not know the value of liberty and do not respect it as it should be respected. Like many other things, its value and meaning are not clear to us."

Kasravi emphasizes that he never agreed with the socialist idea that the whole world should be put under one government in order to preserve peace. He thinks that this is an impracticable wish and that even if one day socialism brings it to reality, divisions must still continue. The existence of many states is not in itself harmful; only strife between them is harmful. Kasravi's suggestions for a permanent peace are twofold:<sup>2</sup>

1. No state should take advantage of the weakness of any other state.
2. An international body should be set up to safeguard the rights and promote the interests of all states.

On the subject of the activities of the (so-called) Democrat party of Ázarbáiján, during and after the second world war, Kasravi finds that these were aimed against Iran's liberty. The Democrats demanded freedom in the conduct of internal provincial affairs. This demand could soon be extended to the other parts of the country, and could damage

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1. Sarnevesht-e Irán cheh khwáhad bud, p.38.

2. Kasravi, Az Sázmán-e Melal-e Mottafeq cheh natiجه tavánad bud, Tehran 1324/1945.

the stability of the state and the central government. Needless to say, Kasravi continues, the "rebellion" of the Democrats of Ázarbáiján was in accordance with Russian policy and to Russia's benefit. Kasravi then says that if he complains about politicians, this does not mean that he objects to particular individuals; he has no enmity with any of them. The rebellion of the Democrats of Ázarbáiján, however, could only increase bloodshed in Iran and could not possibly benefit the country, but would do nothing but harm.

Kasravi has also left an interesting pamphlet Az Sázmán-e Melal-e Mottafeq cheh natijeh tavánad bud? (The United Nations Organization and its possible outcome).<sup>1</sup> He thinks that there are certain deficiencies in this Organization. According to article 29 of its charter,<sup>2</sup> decisions of the Security Council can only be taken if seven of the Council's members approve, and one of the permanent members (France, China, the U.S.A., Britain and Russia) can veto the decisions. For Kasravi, this raises a difficulty.<sup>3</sup> He does not complain because these particular states have been chosen, but thinks that obviously no important decision will ever be approved when these states usually disagree with each other because their interests clash. Defects of this sort will frustrate

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1. Kasravi, Az Sázmán-e Melal-e Mottafeq cheh natijeh tavánad bud, Tehran 1324/1945.

2. Ibid., p.24.

3. Ibid., p.27.

any improvement and progress of the U.N.O. Indeed Kasravi fears that if article 29 is not amended, there will be no more use in having such a great Organization.<sup>1</sup> All the states which have obtained membership follow their own aims and interests; their attitudes to one another are not absolutely impartial and disinterested. It is difficult to believe that any state will renounce its own rights and favour a weaker state in the event of war or any other difficulty. Kasravi here again rejects the notion that war is an essential part of human nature.<sup>2</sup> He thinks that men have no need to make war and should try to avoid it, just as they try to avoid many other harmful things existing in nature, such as illnesses. As regards the widespread talk of establishing a world government, he reiterates his view that this wish is unlikely to be realized when so many different races, religions and traditions stand in the way, and that even if all the nations were under one government, dissensions between them would be bound to continue. Nevertheless he believes that the world today is improving in this respect, and that a time will eventually come when all countries are under one flag.

In this pamphlet, Kasravi discusses the activities of the Democrat party of Ázarbáiján with reference to Iran's

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1. Az Sázmán-e Melal-e Mottafeq cheh natiجه tavánad bud,  
p. 27.

2. Ibid., pp 29-38.

membership of the United Nations Organization.<sup>1</sup> After the second world war, this party seized control in Āzarbāijān, and when a force of Iranian troops was sent out (in November 1945) to stop its illegal activities, Russia complained and prevented them from entering the province. Iran then asked for help from the United Nations Organization. Kasravi goes on to say the difficulty in Iran is lack of policy.<sup>2</sup> The people do not know where they stand. This country is run by Ministers who are not as capable as they should be. Most Iranian leaders, Kasravi says, have been like tools in the English government's hand. They have even forgotten their basic duty, which is to take care of Iran's interests. Instead they have worked exclusively for the English government. As a result, Iran has become weaker day by day. At the same time Russia carries on a great rivalry with England, and does not like to see England become influential in Iran. Kasravi here as elsewhere insists that the only wise policy for Iran is to remain aloof from both Russia and England.<sup>3</sup> Iran is also torn between capitalism and socialism. On the other hand, Iran possesses a very important geographical position. Kasravi thinks that membership of the U.N.O. is very important for Iran, which needs its protection.<sup>4</sup> At

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1. Az Sāzmān-e Melal-e Mottafeq cheh natijeh tavānad bud, p.46.

2. Ibid. pp 46-64.

3. Dar rāh-e siāsat, pp 78-79.

4. Az Sāzmān-e Melal-e Mottafeq cheh natijeh tavānad bud, p.56.

the same time, the Iranians themselves must try to reform their ways and improve their country's position. The U.N.O. upheld the Iranian case when Iran complained about Russia's instigation of the Democrat party in Ázarbáiján; but Iran cannot depend forever on the United Nations. The Iranians themselves must follow a strong policy if they want to keep their enemies out of their country and behind its borders.

Khwháharán va Dokhtarán-e Má (Our Sisters and Daughters)<sup>1</sup> is one of Kasravi's most interesting books from a sociological point of view. Its subject is the life of women, particularly Iranian women, their customs, habits, dress etc. In it Kasravi gives his ideas about marriage and the role of women in Iranian society.

The first chapter is on the subject of women's dress. Kasravi discusses the fact that for centuries Iranian women were veiled from head to toe.<sup>2</sup> During the Iranian Constitutional revolution, a few broad-minded men first advocated that women should be unveiled. In Kasravi's view, it is tragic that "half of our nation should have been kept in darkness through the centuries and deprived of any opportunity to help in social work." He points out that the veil was not originally an Islamic requirement,<sup>3</sup> but was made orthodox by wrong-headed mollás in later times. In no chapter

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1. Kasravi, Khwháharán va Dokhtarán-e Má, Tehran 1323/1944.

2. Khwháharán va Dokhtarán-e Má, pp 1-9.

3. Ibid., pp 12-14.

of the Holy Qor'án is there any ruling which obliges a woman to cover herself completely. He also says that he is not against the veil as a garment, but against the behaviour and attitude of men who think that such a garment makes women more dignified or respectable. A veiled woman can be unfaithful to her husband and so can an unveiled woman. Men who think that by covering their daughters or wives they can keep them secure are mistaken, because the veil will never make a bad woman good or loyal.

Among the early advocates of the unveiling of women, Kasravi mentions Mirzá Hosayn 'Adálat (one of the leaders of the Constitutionalists at Tabriz);<sup>1</sup> he tried hard to bring light to the women, but the obstinate mollás who opposed any change or reform in society made his position difficult, and so his efforts made no headway. Rezá Sháh the Great, among his many valuable services to the nation, brought about a complete change in the life of Iranian women. He firmly and persistently resisted the narrow-minded mollás, and on January 7, 1937 (17 Dey, 1315)<sup>2</sup> unveiled the nation's women. Although this caused a great uproar and widespread disapproval in the country, Rezá Sháh was successful. This was one of his most remarkable achievements in the task of modernizing Iran. He led Iranian women to a new world, and

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1. Khwháran va Dokhtarán-e Má, p.12.

2. Ibid., p.4.

3. Ibid. pp 8-9.

and (so Kasravi says) changed their outlook completely.<sup>1</sup> The nation's women, who had been degraded for centuries and were in general almost completely ignorant, began to change and to improve their position.

Kasravi recognises that in the villages and tribes of Iran the women had always been unveiled and had fully associated with men and worked side by side with them. Veiling had been practised only in the big cities and among the townsfolk. In Kasravi's opinion, the veil was an excuse for townswomen to behave irresponsibly and ignore their duties. As a result, they became inactive and completely reliant on the husbands; especially in the upper classes of society this effect was very visible. In the great events of Iranian history, such as the Constitutional revolution,<sup>1</sup> the women had not been able to show their abilities or even to play any part at all.

Kasravi goes on to say that women should above all be compassionate and responsible mothers and good companions to their husbands.<sup>2</sup> They should be dutiful wives and stand by their husbands in every difficulty. Since God created women with characteristics different from those of men, public and governmental work, commercial business, and many of the professions are not, in Kasravi's opinion, appropriate

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1. Khvāharān va Dokhtarān-e Mā, pp 8-9.

2. Ibid., pp 27-28.

for women. A person cannot be efficient in two completely different fields of work, and a woman cannot simultaneously be successful in an outside job and in her work in the home; taking responsibilities in both jobs will be too heavy a burden for any woman to carry. At the same time, Kasravi thinks that a wife clearly ought to associate with her husband in every aspect of his life (and not just in the home).<sup>1</sup> In some countries women were then being elected as members of parliament and appointed to political and governmental posts. Kasravi says about this:<sup>2</sup> "I still think that this is a mistake in today's conditions of life. At the present moment every society and government finds it very difficult to ensure that enough employment in socially useful activities and public services is available for the men. When employment is lacking even for men who are expert in their jobs, why should women be engaged? Needless to say this would make the trouble worse." While insisting that girls must be educated as well as boys, Kasravi thinks that the curriculum for girls should be different.<sup>3</sup> It should include the teaching of domestic science and mothercraft.

In this book, marriage and its laws and customs are also discussed. Kasravi considers getting married to be a duty which no man or woman should avoid. A boy becomes physically

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1. Khwaharan va Dokhtarán-e Má, p.43.

2. Ibid., pp 28-29.

3. Ibid., p.46.

capable of marriage at the age of sixteen,<sup>1</sup> but in Kasravi's opinion he should not assume the responsibility and get married until he is twenty five. According to Kasravi, the men in his day often had no sense of responsibility and were too selfish and self-centred to be willing to look after a family. In this difficult situation, either polygamy would have to remain permissible, or men would have to be compelled to marry. Polygamy, however, is an unsound way of married life, and history shows that its results have always been bad. Moreover today, with all the present financial difficulties, men cannot accept too heavy responsibilities. One man is only capable of looking after one wife, and polygamy can no longer be practised. At the same time, Kasravi says, the number of unmarried women in every society is increasing rapidly. The moral leaders of every nation must therefore persuade the men to get married. A woman needs security, and a supporter will give her not only material but also moral security.

Kasravi is against marriage between blood relatives,<sup>2</sup> which is not approved in any religion and usually produces children with mental or physical deformities or at least with less than normal intelligence. He thinks it important that parents should teach their children the facts of life, from

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1. Khvāharān va Dokhtarān-e Mā, p.36.

2. Ibid., p.49.

infancy onwards. They must prepare the children to stand up to the difficulties which lie ahead of them. Another point which he emphasizes is the importance of requiring a health certificate before marriage, both for the man and for the woman.<sup>1</sup> Those who suffer from incurable diseases should be prevented from marriage, because they will not only transfer the disease to their partners, but later will produce children afflicted (through no fault on the children's part) with deformities. Kasravi thinks that marriages ought to be solemnized and registered by the civil authorities.<sup>2</sup> (This was made obligatory by Vol.2 of the Iranian Civil Code in 1935). Close relatives and two witnesses should always be present at the ceremony. Since marriage is such a great event in the lives of the partners, it should be celebrated festively, but within the limits of financial capacity, so that they may value their marriage more highly and appreciate it later.

Turning to the subject of divorce, Kasravi mentions that according to Islamic law a man can divorce his wife at any moment and without any specific reason.<sup>3</sup> In exchange he is supposed to pay a sum of money (the mahr) in order to support his wife until she settles down again. A woman, on the other hand, cannot as a general rule divorce her husband.

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1. Khvāharān va Dokhtarān-ā Ma', pp 54-55.

2. Ibid., pp 58-59.

3. Ibid., p. 28.

Kasravi stresses that marriage is not purchase and sale; its essence is co-operation between a man and a woman. Nobody should marry just for the sake of money, which however useful it may be, most definitely cannot bring happiness. The only security for the Moslem women is the amount of money which her husband has agreed to pay her in case he wants to get rid of her; but it has been proved that this is not a 100 per cent secure guarantee. Although this system could probably work in a primitive society, it seems out of place in the world today.

Kasravi then says that both the husband and the wife should be considerate of each other's feelings and wishes.<sup>1</sup> A man must not expect his wife to be submissive to him. In the old days, and even today in backward societies, men used to consider themselves superior to their wives and behave in a patronizing way. As time passed, men came to value their wives more highly; at the same time women have proved that they are not inferior to their husbands any more.

Kasravi repeatedly emphasizes that marriage is essential for both men and women, and that adultery is the direct result of not marrying at the proper time.<sup>2</sup> He thinks that the most important purpose of marriage is procreation of children,<sup>3</sup> and likens a childless marriage to a fruitless

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1. Khwāharān va Dokhtarān-e Mā, pp 63-65.

2. Ibid., pp 78-80.

3. Ibid., pp 83-84.

tree. He considers sterility in either the husband or the wife to be a valid ground for divorce.

At the end of this book, Kasravi rebukes parents who chose objectionable and unattractive names for their children.<sup>1</sup> Why should they saddle them with names such as Chengiz or Taymur, who were the country's cruelest enemies? There are plenty of beautiful names which Iranians can give to their children; names of stars, flowers and other beautiful things in nature can be used.

Kasravi dedicated another of his books to the women of Iran. Its title is Mowhumât va Kharafât (Fictions and Superstitions),<sup>2</sup> and his chief intention in it is to combat superstition, which has a hold on large numbers of people, particularly women, in Iran.

Many people imagine that they can get to know the future by fortune-telling, whereas in reality it is impossible for anybody to find out his future lot. Today all countries attempt to discover the intentions of other countries, and for this purpose they train spies and carry on various activities. If they could get to know these intentions from fortune-tellers, surely they would not bother to incur such great expenditure. "Why then", asks Kasravi, "should not the British government employ Indian Yogis in its intelligence service?" If fortune-tellers knew anything about the

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1. Khwaharân va Dokhtarân-3 Mâ, p.82.

2. Sureh 6, al-'An'am, verse 50.

future, they could at least improve their own standard of life. It is a great misfortune (for Iran) that people value the predictions of fortune-tellers in so many situations. Even though the Qor'ān says لَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ (I do not know the future), the majority of people only wear a mask of religion and still superstitiously believe that man is capable of prediction.<sup>1</sup> The main purpose of religion according to Kasravi, is to combat superstition.<sup>2</sup> The two are direct opposites. History proves that fortune-telling started thousands of years ago when people did not believe in the existence of one God and worshipped idols. They used to ask an intermediary called a kāhen (sooth-sayer) to speak to their Gods on their behalf. Later they came to believe that one can learn about one's future through interpretation of dreams, and through other phenomena which they regarded as symbols of a part of their destiny, such as stars and their movements, flowers, birds, etc. Sometimes they used special equipment for fortune-telling.

Astrology is likewise a relic from the era of idolatry.<sup>3</sup> In the second and third century A.D., Greek philosophy came to the East and within a short while spread rapidly. Astrology was in great demand not only by the masses of the people, but also by kings and rulers, who regularly practised it and

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1. Sureh 6, al-An'ām, verse 50.

2. Mowhumāt va Kharāfāt, p.17.

3. Ibid., pp25

in every important event obtained and followed their court astrologer's advice. Yet in reality, no matter who the fortune teller might be or what method he might use, it was and is impossible to inform anybody about his future.

Kasravi then notes that Iranians today use the Diván (collected poems) of Háfēz as an augury-book for their decisions.<sup>1</sup> Some even go further, and at every step in their lives refer to a mollá, asking him to decide their problem by taking an augury from the Qor'án. Sometimes they also use the rosary for this purpose. Kasravi emphasizes that by such use of the Qor'án, people show contempt for the Holy Book and disrespect for God.<sup>2</sup>

Besides fortune-telling, other evil practices are carried on, such as magic. Some people have absolute faith in it. Magic has likewise come down from ancient times before sciences evolved. For example, when a person fell ill, magic was practised in the hope of saving his life. Magicians were thus in great demand. After sciences had come onto the scene, people in some parts of the world still continued to practise magic. In Iran, according to Kasravi<sup>3</sup>, there are still a great number of women, and in some environments also men, who believe in its power. They go to magicians whenever they have to deal with a difficulty, and are

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1. Mowhumát va Kharáfát, p.39.

2. Ibid., p.40.

3. Ibid., p.46.

quite satisfied when they get a do'a (written incantation) or a talisman. Mollás were the first who began believing that incantations can cure people's sufferings. The writings of famous mollás such as Majlesi (d.1699-1700) and Mohsen Feyz (d. 1680) contain numerous incantations for the remedy of pains and illnesses. Furthermore, particular days and things are still considered in Iran to be lucky or unlucky signs. For example, the 13th day of Nawruz is an unlucky day on which to stay at home, and all the people customarily go out of doors. The owl is an unlucky bird, and people avoid looking at it. There are thousands of similar examples. Many people are still great believers in the significance of dreams. Although psychology proves that a person who has to handle a particular matter is likely to dream about it, Kasravi thinks that such a person's dreams do not necessarily mean anything.<sup>1</sup> Some people hold sessions for the illusory purpose of getting into touch with the spirits of the dead. Spiritualists in particular do this; they imagine that the spirit can predict their future for them.

The majority of the people in Iran, according to Kasravi, still believe in fate (qesmat) and predestination; they say that man has no freedom to make decisions affecting his own life, all of which depends solely on God. This idea was spread

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1. Mowhumát va kharáfat, p.50.

in the name of religion, and especially of Islam. Afterwards poets with their poisonous poems persuaded people to believe in absolute predestination and give up effort for the improvement of their lives. The greater part of Persian poetry and literature, which Iranians regard as their country's pride and glory, expresses the idea. Such writings threw the nation into idleness and impotence. Kasravi ends by expressing his belief that God created man with a faculty of reason to deal with his problems and a substantial measure of free will.

#### Comment.

Kasravi's ideas in the field of sociology and politics are generally objective, and at the same time dynamic and flexible. Some of them could be applied to all kinds of societies, from the advanced to the primitive. Today the world is in a confused state. The political and social theories which thinkers have put forward through the centuries do not help much to clear up this confusion, because they are not suitable for all societies at all times and are often mutually contradictory. Some are inspired by religious beliefs, others by ideas of morality; being more or less creations of individual minds, they have no common standard of good and evil. The nations of the world are puzzled by

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them. Kasravi formed his ideas after careful study of various theories and deep thought. He also studied different types of government, and learnt a great deal from his historical researches. His ideas are not absolutely original, because more or less similar ideas can be found in other books on ethics and politics, and in religious laws; but he adapted them in his own way.

One criticism which can be made is that Kasravi has not paid enough attention to the practical side of political and social institutions; e.g. he might have said something about the practical problems of making Constitutional government work in Iran and of teaching its true meaning to the masses of the people and in the schools.

It also seems to us that Kasravi does not attach enough importance to psychology. The nations, with their different cultures, geographical situations, social characteristics, and standards of living, will probably never all choose the same type of government and economic system. Perhaps if the nations co-operate, they will one day reduce the differences in living standards between them to a minimum; but even so they will still not agree on everything. Kasravi himself recognised this when he said that a world government will be impractical for a long time. Yet he was trying to present universal principles, valid for all societies. Although

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most of his ideas are admirable in theory, many of them are mainly relevant to Iran or any similar country.

It is difficult to assess the influence of Kasravi's ideas on Iranian political and social thought since his death; but probably it has been fairly considerable. For example, he was one of the first Iranians who argued that only the actual cultivators should be allowed to own agricultural land. This proposal has been carried out in Iran by the land reform approved in 1963. Kasravi may be criticized because he did not see the importance of large-scale modern industries, which are necessarily urban; but he was right in condemning the neglect of agriculture and dereliction of the villages and small towns in Iran and other Eastern countries. He would certainly have approved the present Iranian government's efforts to help the villages through the Literacy Corps, the Health Corps, and the Plan Organization. He would also have approved the Family Protection Law of 1346/1967, which restricts divorce and virtually prohibits future polygamy in Iran.

## CONCLUSION

A country's cultural and social life constantly evolves in accordance with its people's changing attitudes and demands; but in general such changes take place slowly and gradually over long periods. Iran is a country which possesses a heritage of civilized life going back to ancient times. Many scholars, both Iranian and foreign,<sup>1</sup> have observed that although Iran suffered devastating invasions and conquests, its people have kept their rich civilization alive through all these trials right up to the present day, and that in so doing they have made important contributions to the store of human knowledge and art and culture.

Like other nations, the Iranian people do not change their attitudes quickly; and with their deeply rooted civilization and very broad background, they are inclined to be sceptical about new ideas put forward by scholars and thinkers. Kasravi did his best to enlighten the minds of the Iranian masses by showing them facts and truths and by dispelling superstitions and illusions. No scholar, however, could have brought about any immediate change in the people's mentality. Moreover, the circumstances in which Kasravi rose and declared his thoughts were particularly difficult. In

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1. e.g. Dr. 'Isā Sadiq, Sayr-e Farhang dar Irān va Maghreb-zamin, Tehran 1333/1954; René Grousset, L'Empire des Steppes, Paris 1939; etc. etc.

those days the Iranians, after passing through the trials of the Constitutional struggle and the agonies of the first world war, yearned for relief from their sufferings and wanted their problems to be reduced to a minimum. Many people were more or less starved or undernourished, and their only aim was to keep alive. After Rezá Shah's rise to power, the central government tried hard to save Iran from disorder and hunger, and within a short time succeeded in clearing up some of the country's worst troubles. The masses of the people, however, were then still ignorant and almost illiterate. Schools were built to combat illiteracy, Tehran University and many other institutions of learning were established, and important steps were taken to improve the nation's health and well-being. Rezá Sháh the Great personally strove to raise the standards of material and cultural life in Iran; he wanted to familiarize the people with modern methods of work and modern ways of living. After the Anglo-Russian invasion and Rezá Sháh's abdication, Iran entered a new period of trial and suffering, which lasted until well after Kasravi's death.

Although Kasravi's ideas were very relevant to Iran's needs during and after Rezá Sháh's reign, they did not gain rapid acceptance. On the whole they were unpalatable to his contemporaries. Most Iranians in those days clung to

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orthodox ways of thinking, and some were still in the grip of fanaticism and superstition. Consequently any new idea seemed to them a kind of rebellion and sabotage. They were particularly dismayed by Kasravi's religious opinions and sociological theories. To us, Kasravi appears as a great revolutionary thinker, who felt that the contemporary state of Iran and humanity was bad, but did not lack hope for the future. He was certainly an individualist in his way of thinking. His tenacity is also very noticeable throughout his voluminous writings. Above all he was an extremely brave man in his unquenchable eagerness to announce original concepts and doctrines.

As we have just said, the theories of any great scholar and thinker can only become influential after a rather long time; and the elimination of old ways of thinking takes still longer. Even now, less than a quarter of century has passed since Kasravi was killed. At that time only a small minority of upper and middle class people had any opportunity of regular study, while the rest of the nation were still illiterate or barely literate. The great majority of Iranians thus remained quite unaware of Kasravi and his writings, while the upper classes and the government officials were cautious and reserved, because in their hearts they were frightened of change. Kasravi's writings have thus had less influence

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than he hoped and expected; but interest in them seems to be growing, and seems likely to grow further now that Iranian society is advancing and the number of broad-minded educated people is increasing rapidly.

Kasravi's valuable works of scholarship and original research, especially in the fields of history<sup>1</sup> and linguistics, have always been highly esteemed by experts in these fields. Although some of his suggestions for language reform were rather artificial, a number of the pure Persian words which he recommended have come into daily use in the conversation of ordinary people. As regards Persian poetry and literature, Kasravi's ideas, while not lacking an element of truth from the ethical and social viewpoint, are exaggerated and one-sided; they are therefore never likely to have much influence on Iranians, who for centuries have been devoted to poetic and literary art. We think that Kasravi also made a great mistake in denying the value of the researches into Iran's heritage done by European and American orientalists. He may have been right in saying that some orientalists were not sincere scholars and that they worked for the benefit of their own countries and did not want Iran to advance; but we are sure that this is not true of all orientalists. E. G. Browne, for instance, proved through his scholarly works and through his efforts on behalf

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1. His Tārīkh-e Mashruteh-ye Irān (History of the Iranian Constitutional Struggle) was reprinted in 1344/1965, by the Āzādegān (see below, p.

of Iranian freedom that he was a devoted lover of Iran. We do not think that many scholars in Iran today share Kasravi's views about orientalists. This is one example of a failing which can often be seen in Kasravi's pamphlets and newspaper articles, though not in his scholarly works. We refer to his tendency to exaggerate and sometimes to overemphasize a one-sided viewpoint. He also sometimes uses very strong language. This must have hurt some people's feelings, especially when it was a matter of religious feelings. Perhaps Kasravi's reasoned arguments would have impressed more people if they had been presented in more moderate language; but rightly or wrongly he thought that strong language would make the deepest impression. In those days, this view was generally held in Iran, and particularly by politicians and journalists who used to employ extremely violent and abusive language (fohsh).

Kasravi's books in the field of sociology contain many up-to-date ideas, and also a few ideas which are not so up-to-date. One of his most important points was the need for land reform. He regarded agriculture as the basic human economic activity, and thought that the government has a duty to reclaim land for cultivation and also to introduce agricultural mechanization. At the same time he felt very strongly that agricultural land ought to be owned by the person who

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works on it. Idle landlords who ate the fruit of hardworking farmer's effort did not in his opinion deserve any sympathy, but ought to be deprived of their right of exploitation. Of course the problem was very complicated, because landlords were supposed to invest in the land, especially in ganāts (irrigation tunnels); a few good landlords did invest, in this way but the majority only exploited. Although Kasravi did not study these complications, he was one of the first Iranian thinkers to see the importance of this problem. It was not right, he thought, that a village of say three hundred inhabitants who struggled to earn a livelihood should be owned by an individual who had no interest in their welfare. At that time none of the politicians and government officials took any notice of the problem. They must have resented Kasravi's views, because until 1340/1961 most of the parliamentary seats were controlled by big influential landlords. For a long time the idea of land reform was held back and no improvement was seen in the life of the farmers, until finally in 1341/1963 land reform took place in Iran, and Kasravi's dream came to reality. In spite of difficulties with the financing of ganāts and formation of co-operatives, and attempts by some former landlords to obstruct the reform through spreading false rumours among the villagers, the distribution of the agricultural lands to the new peasant

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owners has been proceeding in all parts of Iran and is now nearly complete. It seems probable that Kasravi's ideas and writings about the need for land reform had some influence on Iranian public opinion and perhaps also on the government's decision; but it is not possible to judge how important this influence was. Whether it was important or unimportant, Kasravi deserves great admiration for having been the first to write clearly and vigorously in support of justice for the farmers. Before Kasravi wrote, some socialists had condemned the then existing land system in Iran and had objected to any sort of private land ownership. Kasravi, however, proposed peasant ownership as the most equitable and most human and truly Iranian solution.

Kasravi's importance was as a thinker and scholar, not as a politician. Although he founded a political party, the *Ázádegán* (Free Men) in 1933, its members were never particularly active in the political life of Iran; even during his lifetime, their activities centred on ethical and social matters rather than politics. The *Ázádegán* still exist today, but no longer as an officially recognized political party. They have small organizations in the major cities, and are active on a larger scale in *Ázarbáiján*. The members hold their gatherings in private houses, not in clubs or fixed places. They do not now publish any special periodical. They mainly concentrate on studying Kasravi's books and

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writings, and from time to time they republish them. Their new edition of his History of the Constitutional Struggle, published in 1965, has been particularly valuable. It would have been difficult for us to compose this thesis without these new editions.

As we mentioned earlier, there seems to be a growth of interest in Kasravi's writings, both among broad-minded young Iranians and among foreign scholars. In recent years, several articles about him and his books have appeared, and it may be worthwhile if we refer to some of them.

Dr. Amin Banāni in his book "The modernization of Iran" writes as follows:<sup>1</sup> Once there was considerable misgiving among Iranian intellectuals about indiscriminate adaption of the materialism of the West... It was Kasravi who emerged as the chief spokesman of these views. The appearance of his book Āyin ("The Greed")<sup>2</sup> in 1932 created a stir in the intellectual circles of the time. Although this book contains many implicit criticisms of the reforms of Rezá Sháh, it was allowed to circulate because its central message was a condemnation of the materialism of the West. Furthermore, it was critical of traditional Islam and particularly of the Shi'ite clergy in Iran. In a long succession of subsequent

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1. Dr. Amin Banāni, The Modernization of Iran, Stanford (California), University Press, 1961, pp 49-50.

2. See above, p.

books and articles, Kasravi developed these ideas at length. The regime of Rezá Sháh could not, of course, permit the existence of a distinct and independent ideology; but Kasravi's differences with the official ideology were not serious, and the regime found them easy enough to ignore. He soon acquired a large following, mainly composed of professional men (including government officials) and students, who managed to give his ideology the attributes of a pseudo-fraternal organization. His popularity amongst the nationalist elements was particularly great after the abdication of Rezá Sháh. But with the re-emergence of religious influences in the public life of Iran, Kasravi and his followers were subjected to persecution, and Kasravi himself was assassinated. It is important, however, (see Banání says) to keep in mind that the articulate urban Iranian, despite being soundly critical of Western materialism, displayed an endless appetite for all the Western comforts and amenities of life."

Professor Leonard Binder in his book on Iran writes:<sup>1</sup>

"I think it significant indeed that such widely divergent writers as Maududi of Pakistan, Kasravi of Iran, Aflaq of Syria and Nasser of Egypt have such similar notions of revolution. All insist on the need for fundamental changes. For

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1. Leonard Binder, Iran: political development in a changing Society. Berkeley and Los Angeles University of California Press, 1962, p.56.

all four, revolution means not merely the seizing of power, it is also the changing of the people's beliefs and behaviour." As regards the Tudeh (Communist) party, Binder thinks that it succeeded "in reaching the industrial workers and some peasants, at the same time appealing to the intellectual snobbery of the students with publications including avant-garde poetry, discussions of new Western art, and philosophical tracts. They emphasized the evil result of the alliance of feudalism and imperialism." At the same time, Binder observes that "the primer of modernization for most of their non-foreign trained members was Kasravi and his outrageous iconoclasm."<sup>1</sup>

Later in his book Binder says: (Today in Iran) "there are also remnants of the followers of Kasravi, who meet occasionally and reprint his writings for distribution. These call themselves patriots, and they seek the salvation of their country in the purification of Islam and the establishment of true Constitutionalism. Feudalism and imperialism are not so much the problems as are the superstitions and false faiths of imamism, sufism, impractical philosophical speculation, interpretations of the Persian poets, and the study of allegorical enegetics. Obviously the work of Kasravi (so Binder says) was largely negative, in that it shook the foundations of tradition for his young readers. His own "religion of purity" and his Constitutionalism

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1. Binder, Iran, p.81.

did not replace that tradition, but the way was opened for new secular ideologies."

In a new Persian periodical named Kāveh<sup>1</sup>, published at Munich (second year, 1965), a certain Hormoz Ansāri wrote an article about Kasravi entitled Sokhan-i chand dar bāreh-ye Farzand-e Arjomand-e Irān, Sayyed Ahmad Kasravi (A few words about a worthy son of Iran, Sayyed Ahmad Kasravi). Ansāri admires Kasravi for having been an extremely hard-working research scholar, and for his great courage in telling the truth. Kasravi was always devoted to his profession and honest in it. At the same time he was fearlessly outspoken, and this quality later became his worst peril. He was surrounded by numerous foes and eventually sacrificed his life for the sake of honesty and truth. All through his life he tried hard to explain what he believed would be the most effective remedies for the Eastern societies and particularly for Iran. He was not prejudiced and he tried to understand the real meaning of life; at the same time he possessed a very high degree of intelligence. He challenged his enemies and also many government leaders whom he considered disloyal. He left behind a large number of books. Ansāri praises Kasravi's open-mindedness as a historian and thinks that his historical researches are of very great value, above all his

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1. This new periodical, started in 1967, has taken the name of the illustrious periodical Kāveh published at Berlin in 1916-1921 under the editorship first of Sayyed Hasan Taqizādeh and then of Kāzemzādeh Irānshahr.

masterpiece on Iran's Constitutional revolution, but also his book on the "Unknown Rulers" and his account of "Five hundred years of Khuzestán's History." His achievements in the field of Persian linguistics and dialectology are also, in Ansár's opinion, very considerable. Already before Kasravi a few scholars had tried to purify Persian from Arabic; but Kasravi was much the best of them.

In 1966, a certain Mr. Hosayn Yazdáníán wrote an article in Káveh under the title Ráh-e Kasravi (Kasravi's Path). Iranians in general, he says, and young people in particular, think that all great changes have been started by Europeans. They never believe that the Eastern nations, including the Iranians, are also capable of creating original ideas. There are a number of Iranians who are well informed about Iran's social history, and also about the weak points of the Iranian national character; but according to Yazdáníán, these persons are dishonest and for the sake of their own interests do not really want the nation to make progress. That was the main reason, in his opinion, why they banned Kasravi's books. Yazdáníán thinks that Kasravi's books should be read and compared with the evidence of reason, history and civilization, so that truth may be learnt from them. In the present age, the cultured class ought to have beliefs, principles and goals. Among the more than eighty

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books which Kasravi wrote, Yazdāniān considers Varjāvand Bonyard, which sets forth Kasravi's fundamental beliefs and concepts, to be the most interesting and beneficial. He thinks that Kasravi's works in the field of sociology can contribute as much to the solution of social problems as Einstein's and Newton's works contributed to physics. He also thinks that Kasravi is a good moral guide. Many European thinkers look upon this life as merely a battle-field, and have a low opinion of this world; the pessimistic philosopher Schopenhauer (1788-1860) even recommended celibacy and suicide as the best consolations for man's sorrow. Kasravi, on the other hand, has hope for this world and believes in the value and dignity of life.

After Kasravi's death a number of speeches by his followers were collected in a booklet Ruzbeh-e Paymān ("Anniversary of the Birth of Paymān"), which was published at Tehran in 1342/1963). Mr. Bani Ahmadi said<sup>1</sup> that Kasravi had established Paymān, and had devoted and then sacrificed his life for the sake of making known the truth. The great majority of newspapers, in Bani Ahmadi's opinion, are valueless, because they are merely commercial; but Paymān was not in the same category. It was like a guide for the masses of the people. If Iranians will pay attention to Kasravi's

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1. Ázádegān party, Ruzbeh-e Paymān, Tehran 1342/1963, pp 3-6.

writings, they will very soon, Bani Ahmadi thinks, become a great and powerful nation in the world. The Ázádegán (Kasravi's followers) are therefore trying to make Kasravi's ideas more widely known by republishing his books.

Mr. Yazdáníán, another follower of Kasravi who has already been mentioned, said in his speech that Kasravi with God's inspiration and grace had announced his ideas and invited people to his path, but had never pretended to be a prophet. Kasravi's way of thinking is not exclusively for the Eastern nations, but is applicable to all countries and nations of the world.

Another disciple of Kasravi, Mr. Asghari, said<sup>1</sup> that history has shown that great leaders exercise very little influence when they first embark on the task of guiding the masses, and that this is true of Kasravi. Even so, Asghari is convinced that Kasravi pointed to the right path and direction for people. No doubt sooner or later people will begin to pay more attention to the writings of this great thinker.

A certain Mr. Siávoshi said that Kasravi came pure and departed pure. He died a cruel death, but his name will always live.

Mr. Qorbání, another speaker, said<sup>2</sup> that the Iranians throughout their history have been divided into different

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1. Ruzbeh-e Paymán, pp 17-25.

2. Ibid. pp 25-30.

groups and have practised various religions. Ultimately a great leader arose who tried to put an end to this mental confusion; he was Ahmad Kasravi. In his writings Kasravi had insisted that man must have a true and sincere conviction so that he may be able to cope with the difficulties of this life. Kasravi was a great genius who perceived the state of confusion, and tried to discover the realities of life and find effective remedies for its difficulties."

Although Kasravi was disliked by certain groups for his frank expression of strong ideas about literature, poetry and religion, his death caused intense distress and sorrow. The deplorable circumstances of his assassination shocked people, whether or not they agreed with his views. We quote below some comments which were published at the time about this tragic event and which show how generally Kasravi was admired, not only by his special followers but also in wider circles.

In 1947 the well known literary magazine Sokhan published an article<sup>1</sup> saying that the death of Kasravi was one of the most tragic events of the present age. He was assassinated in the Ministry of Justice, which is supposed to fight against crime and provide security for the country. He was one of the greatest scholars in the Iranian world of learning, without an equal in his time. His valuable researches

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1. Sokhan, No.1, year 3, 1325/1947. Sokhan was founded in 1333/1944 by Dr. Parviz Natel Khanlari.

in different fields of knowledge are highly esteemed not only by Iranians, but also by orientalists all over the world. Kasravi was the first scholar who studied the origins of the old Ázari language and ascertained that it was a pure Persian dialect. His books on historical subjects are outstanding, and are particularly valuable because they are so trustworthy. Kasravi always searched for all the available evidence and examined it with the utmost care. He studied Armenian, because he realized that for thorough-going research into Iran's history this language is very useful. The great value of his linguistic researches is likewise undeniable. He was certainly a very accomplished and accurate linguistic scholar, as his work on Iranian city and village names shows. In his newspaper Paymán he courageously expressed his views on religion and society. His criticisms angered his enemies and were the cause of his death. After receiving one serious injury, he stood firm in the face of his enemies, and finally lost his life. The anonymous writer of the article goes on to say that although he is not a follower of Kasravi and entirely disapproves of Kasravi's views about Persian poetry and literature, this does not prevent him from admiring Kasravi. His murder was a national disgrace. Kasravi was at least more honest than many of his critics. His frank outspokenness was in itself a valuable service.

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1. General Hasan Arfa', in his book Under Five Shahs (London 1964), p.391, mentions Kasravi's murder and says that he was a distinguished historian and patriot, but to whose peculiar religious views exception had been taken.

In a magazine called Bashar bará-ye Daneshjuyán (Humanity for Students),<sup>1</sup> Mr. Abu'l-Fazl Mosaffá wrote that Kasravi's death was a great loss to the world of learning. His murder showed that the right of freedom of thought did not exist in Iran. He had tried to eliminate old-fashioned doctrines and ideas which harmed the people's minds, and had struggled against superstition; but unfortunately he was not appreciated. His numerous enemies had falsely accused him of disparaging Islam and burning the Qor'án, in the expectation that if they muddied the water they could catch the fish. Mosaffá compares Kasravi's death with the deaths of Amir Kabir and Dr. Aráni<sup>2</sup> who, he says, were also great patriots. Mosaffá hopes that future generations will pay more attention to Kasravi's writings. He puts Kasravi in the same category as the Protestant leaders Wycliffe in England, Jan Hus in Czechoslovakia, and Martin Luther in Germany, and sees a particularly close similarity of character between Kasravi and Hus. Kasravi's death showed that no single individual can cope with all problems. Future generations must try to unite so that they may achieve the goals outlined by Kasravi.

In a newspaper called Paymán-e Irán, Mr. Mohsen Átash wrote that Kasravi's death showed once again that a great deal of backwardness still existed in Iran. The majority of

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1. Bashar bará-ye Daneshjuyán, No.3, 1325/1946.

2. See footnote 3 on p.325.

the people still lived in a state of absolute ignorance and resented any new idea. Nobody as knowledgeable as Kasravi was likely to appear on the scene again.

In a newspaper called Darya, Mr. Faridun 'Adl declared that Kasravi was certainly not an ordinary man, but a genius who had to fight enemies all through his life and finally died for the sake of liberty. Kasravi was undoubtedly very well informed, and well aware of the Iranian psychology and the nation's weak points. His most virulent enemies were shallow-minded mollás whom he had criticized.

A writer who signed himself J. M. wrote in the newspaper Iran-e Mâ that Kasravi spent all his life trying to guide the people and had finally died because he was such a good and honest moral guide.

An article in a magazine called Pulád said that many people conceal their weaknesses and faults under a cloak. Kasravi's murderers had declared that they committed the murder because he opposed their religious beliefs; this showed the extent of ignorance in Iranian society. Kasravi's enemies could not tolerate his great skill in refuting their arguments and in logically demonstrating his own ideas. He lived courageously and died courageously. Undoubtedly the future generation would suffer even more than the present through this loss.

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After Kasravi's murder, a memorial ceremony was held at Tehran in 1324/1945 by Kasravi's family and followers.

Some of those present made funeral orations, or later wrote obituaries, and these were published in a Memorial Volume.<sup>1</sup> Points from some of them are quoted below.

Mr. Qāne' said that Kasravi's soul could rest in peace. His enemies by killing him had proved their own weakness; but he was not dead. He would live forever, because his precious books would keep his name alive in the hearts of future generations for centuries to come.

Mr. Rahim Saffāri, editor of a newspaper named Alef Bā, said that freedom-lovers must strive to overcome the shallow-minded fanatics, otherwise the cause of liberty might soon fail. Kasravi's death was tragic and unforgettable.

Mr. 'Ali Hāshemiān, editor of another newspaper Salāh-shur, said: "I weep bitterly for the nation which replies with the sword to those who are honest and truthful."

Mr. Afrasyāb Āzād, editor of the newspaper Āzād, said: "To me Kasravi's death is a victory for his ideas. They will soon spread all over the country, sooner than he himself expected."

Mr. 'Ali Akbar Safipur, director of the periodical Parvaresh, said that Kasravi had died, but his ideas and

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1. Ahmad Kasravi, pp 106-108.

thoughts were still with us.

A certain Mr. 'Abdollah Faryār said: "Those who imagine that by killing a great thinker they can keep the Iranian nation in darkness are terribly mistaken. They must realize that humanity has been guided by great thinkers from the first beginning up to now. Kasravi was a great historian, a scholarly researcher, and a courageous advocate of the good. He never coveted wealth or position. His writings revolutionized many people's thinking, and this will continue."

A science student, Mr. Hushang Irāni, said: "I hope that one day the Iranians will recognize Kasravi's worth and fulfill his wishes by putting his ideas into practice."

A law student wrote: "Shame on the nation which, instead of punishing the dishonest, kills a great scholar like Kasravi."

If we glimpse at the biographies of great thinkers, we find that the majority of them toiled all through their lives, but were beaten in the end by their own nation. In all probability the masses of the people in Iran have still never heard of Kasravi, or, if they have, are misinformed about him. Certain groups have opposed and probably still oppose his ideas, because they assume that these ideas threaten their material interests or their religious beliefs; while enlightened Iranians have not enjoyed full freedom to express

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their thoughts about Kasravi's books on account of censorship and clerical hostility. Nevertheless the existence of such a distinguished scholar and such a forward-looking thinker has been a great honour for the Iranian nation. The circumstances of his death showed that Iran was then still living in the middle ages. European nations have passed through similar phases but have finally responded to ideas of great reformers. Iran seems likely to do the same. Today Kasravi's ideas are becoming known in the major cities of Iran, and are being spread all over the country by his followers. We feel sure that his many valuable teachings will soon be better appreciated, and that history will not forget his great services.

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## APPENDIX A.

Further information on Kasravi's life and personality and the sources of his ideas.

The most important formative influences on Kasravi were his training and early services as a mollá; his study and teaching at the American Memorial School, and his upbringing in the contemporary environment of Tabriz.

Dr. Mohammad Javád Mashkur,<sup>(1)</sup> who was a student of Kasravi and one of his close friends, thinks that Kasravi's early profession as a mollá was particularly important. Kasravi all through his life was intensely interested in religious matters and always had a strong faith in God. His stay at the American school, which was a missionary school where religious matters were freely and eagerly discussed, broadened and deepened this interest. At the same time Kasravi's instinctive patriotic feelings were strengthened by his studies of the Pahlavi language and ancient Iranian civilization with Dr. Herzfeld. Tabriz, before the first world war, was Iran's most important commercial city. The Tabrizi merchants did a great deal of business with Russia and Turkey and other foreign countries, and many Tabrizis went to live and work at Baku, and Istanbul. Although most of the merchants were very religious, and many were related to mollás, some of them picked up new ideas from

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1. Interview with Dr. Mashkur at Tehran University, February 1969.

Russian liberals and socialists and from Turkish reformists (who then had to work in secret). These ideas were expressed in the writings of 'Abdol Rahim Tálebov and Zayn ol-'Ábedin Marághé'i. Kasravi himself has related that the two books which most influenced him, were Tálebov's Ketáb-e Ahmad and Zayn ol-'Abedin's Siáhatnámeh-ye Ebráhim Beg.<sup>(1)</sup> Among the liberal-minded Tabrizis who acquainted him with the idea of constitutional government, Kasravi has mentioned<sup>(2)</sup> Mirzá 'Ali Hay'át, who after the Constitutional revolution became a judge of the High Court (Diván-e 'Áli-ye Keshvar), Mirzá Jaf'ar Khámne'i, who was a merchant, and Mirzá Qássem Foyuzát, who was the leader of the movement to set up reformed schools in Ázarbáiján.

Dr. Mashkur spoke of two other books which influenced Kasravi: Ketáb-e Jalál ol-Dowleh, by Mirzá Áqá Khán Nuri Kermáni, and Tahrir ol-'Oqalá, by Shaykh Hádi Najm Ábádi.

Even more than in other Eastern countries, thinking people in Iran and especially at Tabriz were stirred by Japan's victory over Russia in 1904 and by the Russian constitutional revolution of 1905. Kasravi was old enough to know about these events; but he was too young to have known about Britain's difficulties in the Anglo-Transvaal war of 1899-1902, which also impressed some people in Iran.

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1. See above, p.15.

2. See above p.16.

Kasravi's support for the Iranian constitutionalists, and in particular for the Tabrizi Mojáhedín and the Democrats, need not be reiterated here. What is less clear is his attitude towards the "October" revolution in Russia and the Communist Soviet régime.

As mentioned on page 9 above, Kasravi after leaving the American school in 1917 made a 45-day visit to Russian-ruled Transcaucasia. It is surprising that he has left no detailed account of this visit, because he is likely to have witnessed exciting events and to have talked with Northern Ázarbáijání liberals and socialists and patriots. We have not been able to find out exactly when this visit took place. (The Tsar's abdication took place in March 1917, and was followed by Kerensky's provisional government. The communist October revolution actually took place on November 7, 1917. The Russian Soviet government did not conquer Transcaucasia until 1920. In the meantime independent Georgian, Armenian and (Northern) Ázarbáijání republics came into being. Kasravi's only expression of opinion about the Russian communist revolution appears in Tárikh-e hejdah-sáleh-ye Ázarbáiján,<sup>(1)</sup> where he says that the bloody revolution in Russia was destiny's revenge on the Tsarist régime for all the bloodshed it had caused in Iran. This suggests that Kasravi disapproved of the bloodthirstiness of the Russian communists; and he probably also disapproved of their

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1. Tárikh-e Hejdah Sáleh.

atheism.

On p.10 we mentioned that Kasravi at first actually supported Shaykh Mohammad Khiábáni when the Shaykh founded a new Democrat party at Tabriz, but broke away from him even before he rebelled against the Central Government and set up the "Republic of Ázádestán" (February-September 1920). Sayyed Áli Ázari, in his book on Khiábáni's revolt,<sup>(1)</sup> mentions that Khiábáni felt a great respect for Kasravi and said that modern Iran needed men such as him, while Kasravi after Khiábáni's defeat and death prayed forgiveness for Khiábáni's soul. Kasravi, being both a reformist and a nationalist, probably sympathized with Khiábáni's plan for reform but feared that his plans for revolt might endanger Iranian sovereignty in Ázárbáiján; he may also have thought that Khiábáni and his followers were too much influenced by Russian ideas.

Kasravi's nationalism also need not be reiterated here; but it must be stressed that Kasravi was also an internationalist, because he believed that all the nations should recognise each other's rights and independence and that they should not only settle their disputes in an international court or forum but should also actively help one another. Although Kasravi was so devoted to the Iranian Constitution and so hostile to despotism, it is perhaps true that he valued national independence even more than constitutional government.

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1. Sayyed 'Ali Á. Qíám-e Shaykh Mohammad Khiábáni dar Ázárbáiján, Tabriz, 1329/1950.

Mr. Ebráhim Taymuri<sup>(1)</sup> thinks that "Kasravi was not so much interested in democracy as he was in the independence of Iran. For him the (Constitutional) revolution is justified by its goal of making Iran free, strong and prosperous once more. Individual rights, Constitution, parliament, even a free press, appear at least by implication to be sought only as instruments of nationalism."

For Kasravi, Rezá Sháh was the symbol of an active man. He always appreciated Rezá Sháh's services to Iran. They met on several occasions. When Kasravi decided to write his Tárikh-e pánsad-sáleh-ye Khuzestán, he asked the Shah for a copy of the Sháh's travel diary of the expedition in 1925 which subdued Shaykh Khaz'al, and his request was granted. We were told, however, that after Rezá Sháh's abdication Kasravi criticized his decision to resist Russia and Britain when they presented their demands to Iran in Shahrivar 1320/August 1921. We were also told that Kasravi once met the present Sháh Mohammad Rezá and advised him to follow the same path as his father, namely the path of nationalism and of building factories in Iran.

At the same time, Kasravi sincerely believed in the need for individual freedom. In Rezá Sháh's reign, and particularly after the passage of a law against communist subversian in 1931, freedom of speech was severely restricted by censorship, and the number of newspapers which were permitted to appear

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1. Ebrahim Taymuri, in Firuz Kázem-Zadeh, ed., Iranian Historiography, pp 431-434.

was small. Kasravi could not have got and kept permission to publish Paymān unless some of the high circles in the government, or even perhaps the Shāh himself, had approved the general nature of his ideas. On the other hand, Kasravi, as we have mentioned, had difficulties when he worked in the Ministry of Justice, and after his resignation the authorities refused him permission to practise as a lawyer. Kasravi's book Áyin, which was his most important book on religion, seems to have disappeared soon after its publication in 1322/1933. It must have been banned and confiscated by Rezā Shāh's censorship, and it continued to be banned after Rezā Shāh's fall. Another noteworthy point is that Kasravi's other important books on religion and politics such as Varjāvand Bonyād, Be khwanānd va dāvari konand, Sufigari, Dar payrāmūn-e-Ravān, were all published in the years 1320/1941-1324/1945, i.e. after Rezā's fall.

After the Anglo-Russian invasion, the Iranian censorship was suspended and replaced by a Russo-Anglo-Iranian censorship, which allowed freedom of publication, except about the war and about the Soviet activities (e.g. in Ázarbāijān). While we cannot know definitely, we think that probably Rezā Shāh's censorship would not have allowed publication of Kasravi's controversial books about religion and politics. Communism was banned by the law of 1931 and even the mention of it in a book criticizing materialism would possibly not have been allowed. The fact that Kasravi wrote nothing about Caucasia

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and Northern Ázarbáiján, when he probably knew so much, may perhaps also be explained by censorship, because the government did not want to make relations with Soviet Russia worse.

In regard to religion Rezá Sháh's ideas were probably somewhat similar to Kasravi's: he believed in God, but was determined not to let obscurantist mollás keep Iran backward and go on controlling the schools and law courts. The most serious opposition which Rezá Sháh had to face came from mollás. After the compulsory unveiling of women on 17 Day 1315/7th January 1937, mollás caused riots at Mashhad which were suppressed with bloodshed. Probably Rezá Sháh's government having already so much trouble on its hands with the mollás, did not want to add fuel to the flames by letting Kasravi publish books which the mollás would have called (and later did call) "godless."

In the years 1941-1945, as we have explained, there was no ban on such publications. Kasravi in fact never denied God, nor Islám, as the mollás falsely alleged. On the other hand, it is perhaps true that he sometimes wrote and spoke and preached in the manner of a "prophet". (It is said that the scholar and Prime Minister Forughi was the first who criticized Kasravi for speaking like a "prophet".)

Dr. Mashkur thinks that in fact Kasravi was moving unconsciously towards a new belief, and that Pák-Dini is very

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different from all existing forms of Islám. Dr. Mashkur explains the matter as follows. In Kasravi's time any social reform in Iran still had to be expressed in religious terms. Kasravi's fundamental aim, he thinks, was to bring about social reform, but his upbringing and way of thought made him unconsciously give it a religious colour.

As regards Kasravi's private life, we learnt that he married four times. As mentioned on p.12, his first wife died leaving two daughters. His second marriage did not last long and ended in divorce; "in spite of this his former second wife continued living in his house." While serving as a judge, he decreed the divorce of a baker from his wife, and later he married this woman as a temporary wife (sigheh). This gave his enemies an opportunity to say things damaging to his reputation. His fourth marriage was to a lady secretary. Dr. Mashkur said that Kasravi was a very assertive and obstinate man.<sup>(1)</sup>

After Kasravi had been attacked for the first time, he was taken to the Najmieh hospital where the Chief of the Tehran Police, Brigadier-General Zarrábi, and the Minister of the Interior, Sayyed Mohammad Tadayyon, went to visit him. Although he was badly wounded with one bullet remaining in his body, he did all the talking and gave his visitors no chance to open their

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1. Dr. Gholám Hosayn Zarrin-kub says the same in his book Nagd-e Adabi, Tehran, 1338/1959.

mouths. After leaving the hospital, Kasravi issued a broadsheet in which he described his attacker as a "second Ebn Moljam."<sup>(1)</sup> When he was dismissed from the Ministry of Justice, he received a letter telling him that he had been placed "on the reserve list" (montazer-e khedmat; literally, "waiting for service"); he wrote back saying "Khedmat montazer-e man bashad" ("The service can wait for me.")

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1. Ebn Moljam (Ibn Muljam) was the Khārejite assassin who attacked the Emām 'Alī.

## APPENDIX B.

Some comparisons of Kasravi's religious and political ideas with other contemporary ideas.

It may be worthwhile if we compare some of Kasravi's religious and political ideas with those of a few other Iranian and foreign writers.

Mr. Ebrāhīm Taymumi, writing in the book *Iranian Historiography* edited by Firuz Kāzemzādeh, states that the mollās of Iran were, with few exceptions, fanatical and uninformed. This group opposed everything new, even considering European scientific discoveries harmful to Iran. For the sake of their own interests they kept the people of Iran in ignorance and superstition.<sup>(1)</sup>

Although this condemnation of the mollās may sound exaggerated, we think that it is undoubtedly correct. With the exceptions of the great religious leaders who worked so hard for the constitutionalist cause, such as Sayyed 'Abdollāh Behbahani, Sayyed Mohammad Tabṭabāi, and Seqat ol-Eslām, Iran has produced few reforming clergy. One of the few was Shari'at Sangalaji (d. 1322/1943), who had ideas rather like those of Shaykh Mohammad 'Abdoh in Egypt. He founded an Islamic Missionary Society (Anjoman-e Tabligh-e Eslāmi) at Tehran and wrote *Kelid-e Fahm-e Qor'ān* (2nd ed., Tehran, 1363 lunar/1944) and

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1. Ebrāhīm Taymuri, in Firuz Kāzemzādeh ed., Iranian Historiography, pp 431-434.

many other books; but he was denounced as a heretic because he believed in resurrection of the soul but not of the body, and did not believe that the Twelfth Emām is still alive. Mr. Taymuri thinks that Kasravi was a provocative but undisciplined and confused thinker and that he went much further in his attacks on the mollās and on the established religion than anyone before him had done. He even began to question some of the fundamentals of Islām, thus earning the hatred of the religious fanatics, who finally brought about his assassination. Kasravi was a nationalist, and it is usually assumed that contemporary Iranian nationalism is of Western origin. There can be little doubt that Western influences were instrumental in fashioning the type of nationalism which exists to-day in Iran; but it would be naïve to close one's eyes to its native roots. As Mr. Kázemzádeh observes, the sense of nationality, pride in Iran's past and hopes for her future, love of the Persian language, and the consciousness of being a people apart from the Arabs or Turks, are feelings which predate the birth of European nationalism.<sup>(1)</sup>

Although Kasravi's nationalism shows signs of Western influence, it was essentially Iranian<sup>in</sup> origin. Kasravi's views and those of his opponents were discussed in articles in Paymán, which continued to appear for a short while after his death.

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1. Firuz Kázemzadeh, 'Asr-e Bikhābari, yā Tārikh-e Emtiāzāt dar Irān, Tehran, 1332/1953, p.22.

A writer using the pen name Foruhá emphasized the great effort which Kasravi made to combat materialism.<sup>(1)</sup> (The theory of materialism is also usually thought to have come from Europe). As Foruhá observes, Kasravi was not so much concerned with the theory of materialism in itself as with its evil results.<sup>(2)</sup>

A writer named Kārshād, author of a book entitled "Mr. Kasravi and the concept of materialism," says that Kasravi did not have sufficient knowledge about materialism; so how could he argue that it is a wrong philosophy and talk about its results?<sup>(3)</sup> Kārshād thinks that Kasravi confused materialism with anarchy. His biggest mistake was that he considered Nietzsche and Schopenhauer materialists.<sup>(4)</sup> Kārshād believes that materialism is a very progressive philosophy and that the materialist dialectic is approved by the educated class of every society. Nietzsche never believed in co-operation in a society, but based his philosophy on the idea that a man should make himself strong and consider only his own interests. According to Kārshād, Nietzsche's theories are more or less similar to Hitler's and Rosenberg's;<sup>(5)</sup> they each believed in a constant struggle between the weak and the strong, and in the superiority of

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1. "Foruhá", introduction to his translation Ayé Ádami az buzineh bar khasteh, article in monthly Paymán, 1326/1947, p.29.
  2. C.f. Dar Payrámun-e Raván, p.2.
  3. Kārshād, Áqá-ye Kasravi va mafhum-e máteriálism, Tabriz, 1324/1947, Sho'levar Publications, p.5.
  4. Ibid., p.6.
  5. Áqá-ye Kasravi ... pp 7-8.

the ruling class in every society.<sup>(1)</sup>

Schopenhauer was a pantheist who believed that man must abandon all enjoyments in this world; so Kasravi was wrong in considering him a materialist.<sup>(2)</sup> Kasravi had emphasized that man's reason is an honest judge between God and evil and that man must rely on his reason;<sup>(3)</sup> and the materialists (so Kārshād says) agree with Kasravi that reason is what distinguishes man from the rest of the creatures.<sup>(4)</sup>

Kasravi had believed the source of human action is not mere selfishness, but that man is led by other instincts apart from selfishness and that man is thus a combination of body and soul.<sup>(5)</sup> Kārshād emphasizes that Kasravi has left one point unexplained. He has neglected to state whether man's body is a material product or something entirely separate from material.<sup>(6)</sup>

According to Kārshād, dialectic materialists do not deny man's selfish desire, but consider its logical evolution through the history of mankind.<sup>(7)</sup> He goes on to say that "real" democracy is the one system which abolishes selfishness and class distinction; but in most societies conflict between the interests of the classes still continues.<sup>(8)</sup>

1. Āgā-ye Kasravi ... pp 7-8.

2. Ibid., p.10.

3. Dar Payramun-e-Kherad. p.7.

4. Āgā-ye Kasravi ... pp 33-34.

5. Dar Payramun-e Ravān.

6. Āgā-ye Kasravi ... p.31.

7. Ibid. p.54.

8. Ibid., p.62.

Kārshād's criticisms prompted a defence of Kasravi by a friend of his using the pen name Negarā, who wrote a book entitled "In reply to Kārshād, The school of Kasravi and materialism".<sup>(1)</sup> He begins by saying that people are prejudiced not only in their religious beliefs, but sometimes also in their social and political attitudes. He thinks that Kārshād was not sufficiently objective about Kasravi, and was not really capable of understanding the true meaning of Kasravi's ideas.<sup>(2)</sup> Kārshād's criticism of Kasravi resembles (in Negarā's view) those of the persons who criticized the ancient Greek philosophers. In fact Kasravi's ideas were just as different from those of the philosophers as they were from those of the theologians. Kasravi had discussed only those philosophical notions which are contrary to mankind's interests, and had aimed to show that man is a superior creature who possesses a soul.<sup>(3)</sup>

Kārshād's views were also criticized in an article by the already mentioned Foruḡa,<sup>(4)</sup> who considers that Kārshād did not understand the real meaning of Kasravi's writings. For instance he misunderstood what Kasravi had written about evolution (jehesh) in nature.<sup>(5)</sup> Kasravi's explanation of

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1. Negarā, Dar Pāsokh-e Kārshād, maktah-e Kasravi va māterialism, Tehran, 1327/1948.

2. Dar Pāsokh-e Kārshād ... pp 10-15.

3. Ibid., p. 15.

4. Ibid., p. 18.

5. Dar Payrāmūn-e Jēhesh. M Foruḡa, <sup>in</sup> Monthly Paymān 1326/1948, pp 25-28.

evolution is different from that of synthesis and antithesis (ettesál va enfesál) in materialism. Kasravi had recognised that long ago there were no signs of life of any kind on the earth, and that gradually trees and plants, and later animals of various kinds appeared, and eventually man.<sup>(1)</sup> All phenomena in life depend on one another and are interconnected. When we talk about evolution, we mean that evolution opens a new chapter in life on this planet, and particularly in human life. Kasravi had explained his ideas in this respect very clearly.

Kasravi's attitude was indicated in an article published in 1958 in the periodical 'Elm va Zendegi'. This begins by saying that today's world is run by science and not by superstitions.<sup>(2)</sup> The Russians have made great progress within short period of time because they threw away religious fanaticism. Religion connects man and God together, and is intrinsically quite different from superstition. The Russians believe that we must teach the young generation whatever we think will be useful. In Iran a complete change in the programme of the schools is urgently required. Mollás disagree with any new penetrating idea, and that is the reason why they disapproved of Kasravi. They could not reply to Kasravi in a moderate way (and so resorted to terror). Subjecting people's

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1. Varjávand Bonyád, p.8.

2. 'Elm va Zendegi', vol.2, Tehran, 1337/1958.

ideas to an inquisition is an abominable thing to do in this present age.

On the other hand, Kasravi was denounced by a member of the Tudeh party named Jahándár in a pamphlet criticizing his book Sarnevesht-e Iran cheh Khwáhád bud. According to Jahándár, Kasravi showed in this book that he did not know the real meaning of politics,<sup>(1)</sup> and consequently was not well informed about political parties. In Jahándár's opinion, Kasravi's criticism of the Tudeh party is not just and honest.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Tudeh party's aim (according to Jahándár) was to save Iran's independence, and it was the most progressive party ever organized in Iran.<sup>(3)</sup>

Kasravi had believed that the Tudeh party never considered Iran's needs; but Jahándár thinks that this party always realized the extent of poverty in Iran and tried hard to eliminate it.<sup>(4)</sup> Jahándár points out that <sup>the</sup> Tudeh party made progress during the first few years after its establishment, whereas Kasravi's party (founded in 1933) was still in its infancy. He goes on to say that such movements (i.e. such as Kasravi's party) have no solid basis and consequently cannot bring about big changes in a nation's life. We must first produce the bare neccessities for the society, Jahándár says,

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1. Jahándár, Pásokh be yak Iráni, Tehran 1324/1945.

2. See p. 325, note 1.

3. Pásokh ... p.3.

4. Ibid., p.5.

and then we may be able to teach people the realities and facts of life and clear their minds of superstitions.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Russians, according to Jahándár, won everything in less than thirty years because they changed their economic structure. The Russian peasants, whose minds were full of religious fanaticisms, became well educated when they were given material comforts.<sup>(2)</sup> Without doubt the Russians had great difficulties to deal with after the revolution in 1917, but they used the mottos:

(1) Bread for everybody.

(2) Hygiene for everybody.

(3) Culture and education for everybody.<sup>(3)</sup>

Kasravi criticized the Tudeh party for having followed the same method of establishment used by parties in European countries; but Jahándár thinks<sup>that</sup> all leftist parties have to consider certain rules and that this is why they all follow a certain programme. He claims that the Tudeh party realized the true meaning of democracy.<sup>(4)</sup> He also states that the Iranian Tudeh party has never objected to religion, and that it respects "religious personalities who do not work for the benefit of foreign agents."<sup>(5)</sup>

Kasravi had always attributed Britain's influence in

1. Pasokh ... p.7.

2. Ibid., p.7.

3. Ibid., p.9.

4. Ibid., p.10.

5. Ibid., p.12.

Iran to two reasons;

- (1) The lack of sincere and well-informed politicians.
- (2) The lack of a straight path and direction to follow.

Jahāndār thinks that Kasravi was right in this, but that he forgot that colonial powers secretly use agents to win dominance in under-developed states. History proves that men like Dr. Arāni and Amir Kabir were put to death because they refused to carry out the desires of these spies and to work for the benefit of foreigners.<sup>(1)</sup>

A science student writing in Paymān in 1946 observed that in Iran many things have lost their real meanings. Mollās throughout history were the group who suppressed the people's feelings and the ideas of anybody with a new and progressive outlook. They behaved like the brutal men who used terror to enforce the inquisition in Europe in the Middle Ages.<sup>(2)</sup>

For a long period religion was a tool in the hands of dishonest people. A group of mollās had accused Kasravi of trying to destroy Islām and to introduce a new religion in its place. When Nāder Shāh had tried to bring about a reformation in order to make peace between Iran and the Ottoman Empire and Afghanistan, he had been accused in just the same way.

1. Pāsokh ... p.12.

2. A. A. Dar Payrāmūn-e Shahādat-e Kasravi, in Paymān, Year 1325/1946, pp 3-6.

Another writer in Paymān in 1946 pointed out that Kasravi was very well aware of the ways of mollās and their dishonesty. He wanted to bring about a reform in Iran's social life. Kasravi's school (maktah) stands above the various religions.<sup>(1)</sup> "Kasravism" is not a religion, but a social and political principle.

Another writer in Paymān remarked that millions of people inherit religion, but do not have a true conviction and do not even practise it. They must be informed of the realities of life. "Kasravism" is a progressive phenomena opposed to all the fanaticisms of religion; it tries to narrow the bridge between religion and science, and actually wants to combine science and religion together.<sup>(2)</sup>

The author of another article thinks that after the Constitutional movement, Iran's originality of culture was endangered, and that both Dr. Arāni and Kasravi were representatives of this destructive tendency.

Although they had altogether different ways of thinking, each strongly opposed Sufism in the East, including Iran. Arāni was a follower of the extreme materialists; indeed he was a disciple of Karl Marx. He expressed his notions in a very scholarly way in his book Resāleh-ye 'erfān va osul-e mādī.<sup>(3)</sup> Kasravi, however, while he was destructive on

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1. E. B., Kasravism mazhab nist, in Paymān, 1325/1946, pp 9-10.

2. A. J., Jahān-e konuni va chistān-e kishhā, Paymān 1325/1946, pp 9-42.

3. Sāhabdel, Paymān, 1324/1946.

the one hand, was also constructive on the other.<sup>(1)</sup> A writer named F. B. Daryá complained that in Iran they kill honest men like Amir Kabir. Instead of eliminating the dishonest they assassinated a scholarly reformist like Kasravi, who had said that it is better to forget the tragedy of Karbalá and think about the battle fields of Berlin and Stalingrad. But the killing of men such as Kasravi cannot stop the thoughts of the people. History cannot be put back. Jan Hus was burnt, but the advance of science could not be cut short.<sup>(2)</sup>

scholar,  
The Turkish/Professor Kemal H. Karpat, who works at New York State University, observes that the modernization reforms in the Ottoman Empire and in Egypt and Iran in the 19th century aimed to re-establish political and social cohesion by simply reorganizing government institutions. Turks, Arabs and Iranians reinterpreted history to prove that they preserved their national identity and creative genius, which were not destroyed by alien influences, but were only prevented from keeping abreast of modern civilization. Turks and Iranians did not hesitate to blame religion for the backwardness of their society. Arabs, being intimately identified with Islam, accused the Iranians and

1. See p. 322 above.

2. F. B. Daryá. Kharáfat-rá bá goluleh moháfezat mi-konand, in Paymán, 1324/1946, pp 31-32.

Turks of imprinting on Islam their authoritarian concepts of government and rigid class differentiation.<sup>(1)</sup>

Professor Karpāt continues saying that the independent states of Iran and Turkey had the illusion that they decided fully what to take from the West. Assured of political sovereignty and a corresponding national identity, they could play down the Islamic heritage and forestall the objections of Moslem theologians to imitation of institutions from the non-Islamic world.<sup>(2)</sup>

Kemāl Karpāt thinks that Iran's social structure is probably the most complex both in the Middle East and in the Moslem world. Reform and change in Iran have not profoundly effected the constitutional structure, as they have in Turkey and the Arab republics.

The beginnings of political modernization in Iran were encouraging.<sup>(3)</sup> The first truly democratic movement for constitutional monarchy in the Middle East took place in 1905-6. Because its leaders were middle-class elements, merchants, religious men and intellectuals, it differed from the Ottoman constitutional experiment of 1876, which was promoted by the bureaucrats.

Most political efforts in Iran to-day are directed at establishing a true constitutional monarchy and a free

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1. Kemāl H. Karpāt, Political and social thought in the contemporary Middle East. 1967, London, Pall Mall Press, pp 4-5.
  2. Political and Social ... p.24.
  3. Ibid. pp 375-376.

political life and carrying out social reforms. All parties, despite their widely divergent ideologies, are united in their desire to achieve the reality of a constitutional régime. The constitutionalists may be described as liberal nationalists and anti-imperialists. Among these, so Karpát says, the influence of the late Ahmad Kasravi, "the advocate of modernism and a return to Zoroastrianism", is strongly felt.<sup>(1)</sup>

It is of course true that Kasravi was an advocate of modernism, and he was also a Pahlavi scholar and an admirer of pre-Islamic Iran; but Professor Karpát is quite wrong in saying that Kasravi advocated a return to Zoroastrianism.

Kasravi and the great Egyptian scholar Shaykh Mohammad 'Abdoh (d. 1905) deserve to be compared because they shared the idea that man can combine religion and science. 'Abdoh likewise believed in reason as man's God-given characteristic, and it was natural, his attitude towards reason being what it was, that he showed desire to promote the development of all the scientific subjects among the Moslems.<sup>(2)</sup> He considered that if reason were exercised in the study of phenomena of nature, there would result, on the one hand, a knowledge of God which would be of religious and spiritual benefit, and on the other, a discovery of the secrets of nature which would result in many practical benefits. Such was his respect for

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1. Political and Social ... pp378.

2. C. C. Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt, Oxford University Press, London, 1933, p.134.

science that he urges upon his fellow Moslems, in all his writings, the duty of the acquirement of the science in which Western nations excel, in order to be able to compete with these nations.<sup>(1)</sup>

Kasravi's ideas (see above, p.59 and pp 278-280) are thus very similar to those of 'Abdoh, and also to those of Sayyed Jamāl ol-Din Asad Ābadi or Afghani (c. 1839-1897) who during his stay in Egypt worked closely with 'Abdoh; but 'Abdoh, who remained within the fold of the Moslem clergy ('olamā) and eventually became Grand Mufti of Egypt, tried (not altogether successfully) to reform the clergy from within, while Kasravi left the fold and criticized the mollās from without. Kasravi and 'Abdoh both agreed with the idea that Islam is capable of reform, and can adapt itself to modern civilization and science. They both thought that the Moslem peoples would be able to work out for themselves a new and glorious order of affairs, without dependence on, or imitation of, European nations.<sup>(2)</sup>

Kasravi may also be compared with Ziya Gökalp (1875-1924), great Turkish sociologist and nationalist thinker. Gökalp was a Moslem and at the same time was always reaching for the new life to be built upon scientific bases.<sup>(3)</sup> He thought that the Moslems had declined, firstly because of their disregard

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1. Political and Social ... p. 135.

2. Islam and Modernism ... p.13.

3. Niazi Berkes, The Development of Secularism in Turkey, MacGill University Press, Montreal, 1964, p. 348.

for the changes in their life, environment and their refusal to realize that religion had to be interpreted in terms of the new conditions in order to maintain a living significance, and secondly because of the loss of the national culture through Islam's tendency to superimpose itself as a civilization.<sup>(1)</sup>

Gökalp regarded culture and civilization as two separate things. He thought that the Turks must adopt Western (i.e. scientific and national) civilization, and that religion has nothing to do with civilization. At the same time he thought that Islam is an important part of Turkish culture (though not the only part). Kasravi's views seem essentially similar to Gökalp's, except that Gökalp carried his arguments to their logical conclusion of secularism (or laicism), i.e. separation of state and religion, while Kasravi nowhere in his writings makes any mention of secularism or of the fact that the Iranian Constitution declares Twelver Shi'ism to be Iran's state religion.

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1. Niazî Berkes, The Development of Secularism in Turkey, MacGill University Press, Montreal, 1964, p.351.

## APPENDIX C.

Some comparisons of Kasravi's ideas on language with other contemporary ideas.

The idea of purifying the Persian language and of using as far as possible only pure Persian (Fārsi-sereh) words was not entirely new. As mentioned above (p.158, n.1), the historian Jalāl ol-Din Mirzā had written a work in pure Persian in 1891-1894, and the poet Yaghmā (1782-1859) had composed most of his verses in pure Persian. The constitutional revolution gave a great impetus to the use of colloquial language (zabān-e 'avāmmāneh ) in writing, especially through the work of 'Ali Akbar Dehkhodā (1880-1345/1956) and Sayyed Mohammad 'Ali Jamāl-zādeh (b.c.1890). Kasravi was not interested in colloquialisms, but in making Persian into a "strong" and more precise instrument of expression for modern use. Although linguistic studies have advanced much further since World War II, Kasravi was in his time the foremost linguist who tried to find out the structures of Persian words and their roots.<sup>(1)</sup>

in 1935,

The Farhangestān was established/at the request of Rezā Shāh and under the chairmanship of Mohammad 'Ali Forughī, to undertake the formidable task of modernizing the language and providing a dictionary of new words; but nothing considerable

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1. Negarā, Arāyesh va Pirāyesh-e Zabān-e Fārsi. Tehran, 1327/1949. (Payman publications), p.30.

resulted from the work of this vast organization. Kasravi was not invited to become a member of it, though he was appointed to one of its committees. (See p. 164 above). Kasravi's friend Negarā thinks that the members of the Farhangestān made the mistake of thinking that the Persian language suffers only from being mixed up with foreign and particularly Arabic words, when it has other, probably more important, defects such as the lack of sufficient regular suffixes and prefixes.<sup>(1)</sup>

Another of Kasravi's friends, Dr. Mohammad Jawād Mashkur, thinks that Kasravi wanted to produce a new kind of grammar for the Persian language, and was prompted to this by his knowledge of Turkish and Esperanto. As Kasravi knew Turkish thoroughly he was under the influence of that language. According to Dr. Mashkur, Kasravi created thirteen kinds of past participle for Persian on the analogy of Turkish.

Kasravi thought there was a prejudiced group who opposed any change in the Persian language in any circumstances because they thought that the works of Hāfez, Sa'di etc. would then become unintelligible to modern Iranians. On the other hand, <sup>that</sup> he recognised/Persian cannot be wholly pure any more than the European languages, which are mixed with one another and with Latin. Among his opponents were Mohammad 'Ali Forughī and other distinguished scholars such as Hasan Taqizādeh and

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1. Negarā, Arāyesh va ... p. 31.

Mohammad Qazvini; and as they were influential in the governmental organization, the idea of language reform soon died down. (1)

Kasravi himself remarked that for more than three years fifty members gathered and made plans in the Farhangestān, and that all they did was to remove some European and Turkish and Arabic words from Persian language, but nothing whatever to strengthen Persian. Kasravi also stated that his relationship with the members of Farhangestān was not friendly; they had invited him to co-operate with them, but he had refused. Eventually the Farhangestān ended up with no result. It seems that Kasravi must have been on particularly bad terms with Forughī who is said to have been the first person who accused Kasravi of "talking like a prophet."

A writer in the periodical Khusheh using the pen-name Gusheh-gir criticized Kasravi's views. Narrow-minded people, he says, never give any credit to their own culture and traditions, but forget them as soon as they become attached to a new idea. The language of a nation is one of the heritages which pass from generation to generation; if a few narrow-minded persons childishly try to spoil the structure of the language, this means that they are indirectly destroying the nation's culture. Gusheh-gir thinks that Persian became mixed with Arabic because, after the Arab invasion, the Iranians had to learn Arabic in order to understand the Qor'ān and

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1. Parcham. First year, vol.1, 1322/1944. P.27.

2. Gusheh-gir (pen name) in Khusheh, vol.48, pp 12-57. Tehran.

and Mohammad's prophetic message; but poets such as Rudaki and Farrokhi Sistāni had tried to elaborate the Persian language and save it from domination by Arabic. Unfortunately Kasravi and his miserable followers did not appreciate the Persian language and the great number of books left by Persian literary men and scholars. They could not begin to understand the beauty of Hāfez's poems. Kasravi was insane when he, for example, used the word sahesh instead of ehsās (feeling).

Gusheh-gir accuses Kasravi of being exceedingly aggressive, and says that Kasravi studied the language from two aspects. First of all he was convinced that all Iranians must have language unity. Secondly, although he was attached to Āzari (i.e. Āzarbāijāni Turkish), he preferred Persian to Turkish, and though that pure Persian words should be used. It could be said that Kasravi made a mistake in not realizing that a language is an instrument of understanding and that the right words are those which are accepted by the society. Kasravi had two methods for purifying Persian:

(1) He tried to find the original roots of Persian words; for instance, he found the word hudeh from its opposite bi-hudeh (useless), and wanted people to say hudeh instead of natijeh (result). This was a right method used by Kasravi (Gusheh-gir thinks).

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(2) Kasravi's greatest mistake (according to Gusheh-gir) was that he tried to invent words whenever he could not find original Persian words to replace Arabic ones, and even sometimes to replace Persian words which he apparently did not like; e.g. shalap for shirin (sweet). Naturally some of Kasravi's words were accepted and used by the people; but most were not.

Gusheh-gir thinks that Kasravi's style of composition sometimes sounds quite nice when one gets used to it, but that his strong nationalistic feelings led him to try to express all his thoughts in a more or less pure Persian which often sounds artificial, and as a result people cannot understand his ideas. Kasravi had accused some people, and in particular the Farhangestán, of inventing new words instead of finding original words, but he had not realized that he himself was unconsciously doing the same thing. He had even alleged that the members of the Farhangestán were too dishonest for such a heavy task.

Kasravi's devoted follower Mr. Yahyá Zoká relates that Kasravi also thought that the Iranians must change their alphabet, but that as this is a very sensitive operation they must consider three points: <sup>(1)</sup>

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1. Yahyí Zoká, Taghvire Khatt-e Farsi, Tehran, 1329/1951.

- (1) A clear alphabet must be drawn up.
- (2) The new alphabet must be easy to learn.
- (3) The new alphabet must be short.

In Turkey, after the change of régime from the Ottoman monarchy to the republic, the government decided to change the alphabet into the Latin characters. Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the republic, was most determined to undertake this task, even though orientalist in particular were opposed to the change and even accused Turkey of being unfaithful to Islam.

The Turkish language reform has been studied by Dr. Heyd. He observes that nationalism, the central pillar of Kemalist ideology, found its expression in a strong demand for the purification of the Ottoman language by replacing its foreign elements with genuine Turkish words, old or new.<sup>(1)</sup>

The flooding of Ottoman Turkish by innumerable Arabic and Persian words was now regarded as a national disgrace, and in the words of the Gazi (i.e. Atatürk), "The Turkish nation, which knew how to defend its country and noble independence, must also liberate its language from the yoke of foreign languages." The romantic, almost mystical, desire to discover the national genius of the Turkish people and to base the new culture on the ancient, partly pre-Islamic,

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1. Uriel Heyd. Language reform in Modern Turkey, Jerusalem, 1954, p.19.

traditions of the nation also played its part. Many Turkish nationalists could not agree with the opinion of previous generations that the Turkish language was incapable of serving, without large-scale borrowing from others, as a Kultursprache.<sup>(1)</sup> Their pride in its harmony, logical structure and morphological richness was a further incentive to rid it of foreign elements. Simplification of the language, the slogan of the Young Turk language reformers, was now represented by the desire for the creation of a pure or genuine Turkish.<sup>(2)</sup>

The linguistic reform reflected only <sup>to</sup> a certain extent the change in the cultural outlook of Turkish society. Essentially it seemed as a means of creating such a change. The fervent belief in the omnipotence of the human will and in the creative élan of the revolution gave rise to the conviction that language, like any other social institution, could be reshaped according to a preconceived plan.<sup>(3)</sup> Like other revolutionary changes in Kemalist Turkey, language reform was prompted both by irrational and <sup>by</sup> rational motives, by ardent nationalism and by practical considerations. These different, and, to some extent contradictory, factors may be responsible for some of the inconsistencies in this movement.<sup>(4)</sup> In the tanzimât period attempts were made to

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1. Language reform in modern ... p.20

2. Ibid. p.20.

3. Ibid. p.21.

4. Ibid. p.22.

oust some Arabic and Persian words, which were unfamiliar even to the educated. The Young Turk reformers banned certain foreign formations, and those superfluous foreign elements for which there were current Turkish synonyms. The Linguistic Society<sup>(1)</sup> has gone much further. In fact it has always refused to commit itself on the final limits of its purification efforts. It has never drawn a definite distinction between alien words which would most likely be (or not be) retained.<sup>(2)</sup>

In Iran, it was during the reign of Rezá Shah, who tried untiringly to familiarize Iranians with modern European discoveries, that the idea of changing the alphabet first appeared; but according to Mr. Yahya Zoká, Sir Denison Ross, the famous English orientalist, opposed the idea and dissuaded the Iranian leaders from doing it.<sup>(3)</sup>

We think that Kasravi committed a big mistake in introducing his ideas in a language unfamiliar to the Iranian society of his time. As a result of this, his ideas did not become properly known to the people. In order to understand his writings one must refer to Yahyá Zoká's special dictionary (Farhang-e Kasravi, Tehran, 1326/1947); otherwise it would be quite impossible to understand the nature of his thoughts.

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1. Türk Dil Kurumu.

2. Language reform in ... p.57.

3. Taghyr-e Khatt-e Farsi, pp 149-151.

The title of Kasravi's important book Varjávand Bonyád is meaningless to most people, even though varjávand is not a word invented by Kasravi, but <sup>an</sup> already existing word.

In regard to language, Kasravi came close to being an extreme nationalist. One is bound to agree with Firuz Kázemzádeh and "Gusheh-gir" that Kasravi's attempt to use a pure Persian vocabulary led to his writing in an artificial style which can often be rather unpleasant.<sup>(1)</sup> On the other hand, when Kasravi does not exaggerate so much in the use of pure Persian, his style, for those who have become accustomed to it, is very agreeable and fluent.

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1. Firuz Kázemzádeh, Iranian Historiography, pp 431-434.

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